
LESSONS
DRAWN FROM THE CRISIS
DEVELOPMENT IN THE
PARTY AND SOCIETY
AFTER THE 13th CONGRESS
OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY
OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

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The Lesson Drawn from the Crisis Development in the Party and Society after the 13th Congress of the CPCs, adopted at the plenary session of the CPCs Central Committee in December 1979 and approved at the 14th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1971, there are good reasons for it. We believe that this points the way to the achievement of an attainment of social development in one or another stage, and the correctness or incorrectness of the starting point chosen for a given historical situation.

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Introduction

There are not many documents which after years can be presented to the world and one's own public unaltered or at least without a few lines of explanation. If we do so today and call your attention once again to the document entitled "The Lesson Drawn from the Crisis Development in the Party and Society after the 13th Congress of the CPCz", adopted at the plenary session of the CPCz Central Committee in December 1970 and approved at the 14th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1971, there are good reasons for it. We believe that time proves the correctness or incorrectness of an assessment of social development in one or another stage, and the correctness or incorrectness of the starting points chosen for a given historical situation.

And time has shown that as far as Czechoslovakia is concerned this document has lost none of its topicality. It contains a realistic analysis of the reasons for the crisis of 1968, of the

strategy and tactics of those forces—at home or abroad—who at that time, which now seems so long ago, tried to carry out a counter-revolutionary coup in Czechoslovakia, and which the latter, with the help of socialist community countries, succeeded in averting. It maps out the path leading to the definitive defeat of the right-wing forces and the further remarkable development in all spheres of Czechoslovak society in socialist conditions. The period from 1970 to the present day was one of remarkable development of an already advanced Czechoslovak State: national income rose by 43 per cent, industrial production by 53 per cent, agricultural output by more than 20 per cent, and per capita personal consumption by almost 30 per cent.

Yet Czechoslovakia is a country to which many communications media in the West devote unusual attention. Not a day passes without a whole number of programmes being transmitted about Czechoslovakia. Let us ask the question: Why this increased interest in a relatively small, prospering Socialist country with fifteen million in-

habitants? The same country which the governments of the West nonchalantly threw at the feet of Hitlerite fascism as booty in 1938 and whose betrayal was paid for by the lives of hundreds of thousands of its sons and daughters? Is it perhaps motivated by the fact that Czechoslovakia is dynamically developing today in all spheres of life, that the living standard of its people is rising from year to year?

A closer look shows that most of the press of the capitalist countries is uninterested in these facts. It is more concerned to hide positive developments in Czechoslovakia from its readers. It is more involved in a long-term, and it should be said, hostile propaganda campaign.

What are the reasons for the unflattering, persistent attention over the years? Some ten years ago, an attempt to stage a counter-revolution in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic was frustrated. The designs of domestic and foreign reactionary elements to turn Czechoslovakia back to capitalism failed. If we look at this issue in its broader international context we see that they

also failed to undo the consequences of the Second World War, failed to destabilize the situation in Europe, to weaken the community of Socialist states. Just over ten years ago, the Czechoslovak people with the help of five fraternal Socialist countries, defended their sovereignty and their socialist system. They defended their bonds of alliance with the Socialist countries, chiefly with the first land of Socialism, the Soviet Union, which in the past was of decisive influence in liberating Czechoslovakia from the rule of Hitlerite fascism and in restoring its national and state sovereignty. Thus it committed another crime in the eyes of those forces at home and abroad who stood behind the attempt to revive capitalism in our country.

We never had any illusions about the objectivity of most of the capitalist press, radio and television. They follow a clear, stipulated goal corresponding to the interests of their owners. We are not surprised that because of them most people in capitalist countries either are ignorant of or have a very distorted picture about realities in Czechoslovakia.

It is not the fault of the ordinary people of capitalist countries that they do not know that the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic is among the leading states in the world as far as living standards go, that it creates optimum conditions for a peaceful life for its inhabitants, that it is able to ensure, and that it does ensure, their legal and social certainties.

Let us mention only a few chosen at random. Czechoslovakia is a country in which there is no unemployment, and where, on the contrary, further modernization must solve the shortage of manpower at a time when a number of countries of the capitalist world are struggling with a long drawn-out general crisis in which the number of unemployed runs into the hundreds of thousands and millions. Czechoslovakia is a country where the state truly ensures the right to work, to education at all levels and without any fees and, moreover, provides a great many grants; where all health care is free of charge; where a woman has six months' paid maternity leave and also the assurance that she can return to her job after

two years, and in the meantime receives considerable allowances from the state; where the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic creates the best conditions for the development of science and culture.

Here you have the answer to the question why the inhabitants of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, regardless of the hostile propaganda campaign, support their top-level bodies. It is because of their common cause.

The document "The Lesson Drawn from the Crisis Development in the Party and Society after the 13th Congress of the CPCz", which we bring to your attention, singles out another important reason for this support. In this document, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia speaks openly, hides nothing from the people of its country, it notes without embellishment problems and difficulties and, simultaneously, the way to overcome them. And in such a difficult situation as Czechoslovakia found itself after 1968.

Warding off the pressure of reactionary forces in a single country, analyzing their advance, and

setting out the path for further progressive development, which life itself has confirmed, can also be instructive for progressive forces in other countries. We are convinced that a reprint of this important document can prove useful to both the international Communist and working-class movement and to each individual who wants to know the truth and who thinks for himself.

The Editors

Since April 1969, the Central Committee, its Presidium together with the Party aktiv made great efforts to explain to the Party, the working class and all citizens the causes of the crisis of our society, which in 1968 culminated in a counter-revolution.

Following up with the evaluation and the conclusions adopted by the CC CPCz, especially after its sessions in September 1969 and January 1970, the Party bodies and organizations elaborated their own analyses which, together with the interviews with one-and-a-half million Party members in connection with the exchange of Party cards, helped to expose still further the activities of the rightist and anti-socialist forces in the Party and society.

The accumulated experience and findings enable us to generalize this collective knowledge of the Party. The CC CPCz is convinced that this document will become a lesson for the Party and will contribute to its further political-ideological and organizational unification, to the strengthening of its Marxist-Leninist character, to reinforcing its leading role and to successful socialist development of our entire society.

I
The modern history of the Czech and Slovak nations was characterized by two basic currents: the fight for the social liberation of working people and the struggle for the existence of our nations and their liberty. Their class and national aspects, internal and international aspects, were mutually overlapping and influencing one another.

Munich and the destruction of the Czechoslovak Republic proved that the ruling Czech bourgeoisie and the Slovak bourgeoisie, which was linked with it, sold out even the very existence of the Czechoslovak independent State for their own class interests of exploitation.

This tragic experience of the broad masses of the people led to a deep change in their thinking and political attitudes. This resulted in a growth of the authority of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia which, in the course of the struggle against fascism and in defence of the Republic, proved to be the only consistent fighter for the class, social and national interests of the working people. By its prin-

cipled policy, the heroism and selflessness of communists in the national-liberation struggle at home and abroad, in which an important share was held by our Army Corps in the USSR and which culminated in the Slovak National Uprising and the uprising of the Czech people, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia won the generally acknowledged position of the leading political force. At the same time, the authority of the USSR increased to an unparalleled extent and the traditionally warm relationship of our nations to the Soviet people, who stood the test during the critical period of Munich as the only faithful ally of Czechoslovakia, bore the brunt of the Second World War and had a decisive share in the defeat of Nazi Germany.

This development in Czechoslovakia, together with the shift in the international class forces as a result of the Soviet victories, created conditions in the country for a national democratic revolution. The liberation of our country by the Soviet army opened up the possibility for our working class to complete, in alliance with other working people, the struggle for the social and national liberation of the Czechoslovak people.

The consistent realization of the aims of the national democratic revolution and its gradual growth into a socialist revolution called forth ever more intensive resistance on the part of the bourgeoisie. The decision on the question of power, on the question of "who will come out on top" between the bourgeoisie and the working class became the basic question of further development: there was either the road to socialism or back to the rule of the bourgeoisie. The attempt of the bourgeoisie to carry out an open counter-revolutionary coup in February 1948 was part of a broadly conceived plan of international imperialism to revise the results of World War Two and to form an anti-communist and anti-Soviet front. However, the CPCz quickly and effectively rallied under its leadership the forces of the working class, the peasantry and other strata of the working people into counter-attack. The result of the course adopted by the Party, in which the People's Militia played an important role, was the crushing of the counter-revolutionary forces of the bourgeoisie.

The February victory was the culmination of the

national and democratic revolution, the completion of the revolutionary struggle of the working class for the definitive adoption of the socialist road. The internal prerequisite for this was a strong, battle-hardened, ideologically and organizationally united Communist Party headed by K1. Gottwald. The Party succeeded in applying in a principled way and creatively the Leninist strategy and tactics of the fight for power under the concrete historical conditions of our country. The external prerequisite of success consisted in the fact that the ties of alliance with the USSR prevented imperialist intervention.

February 1948 fully opened the road to the construction of socialism in our country. A basic prerequisite of socialist construction was to strengthen the power of the working people headed by the working class and the Communist Party in such a way that the new power may fulfil all functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This made it necessary to liquidate the remaining power positions of the bourgeoisie and to create a new type of a socialist State and a new type of socialist democracy. The decisive task of the Party at the stage of the

dictatorship of the proletariat was to ensure the construction of the material and technical basis of socialism and a consistent growth in the cultural and living standard of the people; to protect the unity of the Party and the purity of its Marxist-Leninist teachings; to wage an incessant political and ideological struggle against the influence of the defeated bourgeoisie, against the wavering of the petty-bourgeois strata and the pressure of the imperialist world; to constantly deepen the alliance with the Soviet Union and other peoples' democratic countries. This was the bequest of the February victory, which found its expression in the general line of socialist construction in Czechoslovakia laid down by the 9th Congress of the CPCz in 1949.

This general line was based on the general laws of the construction of socialism, on Leninist ideas and the generalized experience of the CPSU, and applied them creatively under the concrete conditions of our country. It corresponded to the stage of development attained, the conditions and needs of our society, the aims of the revolutionary struggle of the working class and the interests of the broad strata of working

people. It evoked great revolutionary enthusiasm, political and working initiative of the broad masses.

The construction of socialism in Czechoslovakia led to historic changes in the social and economic structure of our society and brought remarkable successes in the political, economic and cultural life of our people.

The suppressed and exploited working class became the ruling class. Thus, in Czechoslovakia, too, the age-old dream of the working people came true – exploitation of man by man was removed. Under the leadership of the CPCz, our people became the conscious creator of its own destiny.

In the economic sphere, socialist relations of production fully prevailed. In order to strengthen and develop them even further, a powerful material and technical basis of socialism was built. As compared with pre-war level, the national income increased in 1969 by 350 per cent.

The revolutionary changes were especially expressed by a rapid growth of industrial production, which was more than six times as high as before the war. The industrialization of Slovakia brought about

a fundamental change, by her transformation from an agrarian to an industrially advanced country. Backwardness, poverty and emigration have been eliminated. Today, Slovakia alone produces more than the entire pre-Munich Republic.

A fundamental change has been achieved in the face and the life of our villages. Socialist production relations prevailed in agriculture as well. A new class has emerged – the class of co-operative farmers whose material standing, cultural standard and social certainty are incomparable to the unsatisfactory position of the private farmer. Thus, one of the most difficult tasks of socialist revolution was fulfilled.

These facts resulted in a fundamental change in the living conditions of our working people and their prospects. Unemployment has been eliminated. Every citizen of the country is guaranteed the right to work, to all-round health services and old-age pensions. In our socialist homeland, social security has been created for the working people, which is one of the main prerequisites of contented human life.

During the existence of the socialist system in our country, the living standard of all classes and strata

of society has markedly increased. Working time has been reduced to five days a week.

The level of education among the people, and the cultural standard of our nations and nationalities in general, increased because the age-old dream of the working class and the working people – to ensure the right to education for all – began to be fulfilled in our country as well. Consistent and generous care of the socialist State for science made it possible to develop scientific and applied research in many fields to an outstanding and often even world standard. The broad strata of the people were given access to the best and most progressive cultural values.

By its economic potential, growth of production, living standard, development of culture, science and education, and by its social achievements for the working people, our Republic reached one of the top rungs on the world ladder of economically advanced countries.

The people are taking an ever more active part in the administration and management of the socialist State. Decisive changes have been achieved and all-round prerequisites were created for a Marxist-

Leninist solution of the nationality question. The Czechs and Slovaks developed into advanced socialist nations and became part of the vanguard of world progress and peace. Marxism-Leninism, as the most progressive ideology of the present world, has become the determining ideology of society.

The results attained in socialist construction are proof that our working people, led by the CPCz, have successfully mastered the complicated revolutionary task of socialist construction. The selfless and untiring efforts of the working class, the peasantry and the intelligentsia, members of the older and the rising generations, resulted in a work which belongs to the most glorious feats in the history of our nations. This provides a guarantee, a basis and a starting-point for the future advance of our socialist society.

The alliance and co-operation with the socialist countries, and especially with the Soviet Union, gives our people not only security against the threat of aggression and blackmail on the part of imperialism. It ensures our nation's State and national certainty and sovereignty and creates all-round prere-

quisites for their political, economic and cultural development. It protects our national economy against shocks of crises occurring on the capitalist market. The Soviet Union supplies not only the necessary raw materials and equipment, but also provides a permanent and certain market for our products and assists selflessly with its specialists and experience. Without this co-operation and assistance, the construction of socialism in Czechoslovakia would be impossible to achieve.

The experience gained by our people, under the leadership of the CPCz, in socialist construction confirmed that the principles of socialism are also fully valid for countries which embarked upon the road to socialism at the stage of an industrially advanced economy. In these countries, too, socialism gives the working class and all the working people qualitatively higher, otherwise unattainable possibilities of progress.

The road of building socialism was not an easy one, and was accompanied by obstacles and difficulties. During the intensive and complicated development which our society went through, and in which

the Party and working class were only learning to master the art of management and ruling, there occurred faults and tragic errors. Besides difficulties stemming from the novelty and complexity of the tasks, socialist construction was also accompanied by certain errors of subjective character. They appeared in the form of self-satisfaction, inconsistent application of Leninist principles in the life and work of the Party, insufficient generalization of practice and the accumulated experience of the masses, neglect of a class approach to social problems, running ahead of development, violation of principles of democratic centralism and inner-Party democracy. The weakening of political and ideological work blunted the fight against bourgeois ideologies, petty-bourgeois tendencies and ideological subversion. This logically influenced the weakening of the ties between the Party and the masses of the working people.

The faults and shortcomings in this country were all the more serious that great weight in the social structure of our society was wielded by numerous petty-bourgeois strata in the villages and among the town population. These strata represented a signi-

ficant political current with great tradition, strong organization and a clear-cut petty-bourgeois ideology of nationalism, Masarykism and social-demokratism which was deeply rooted and also penetrated certain parts of the working class. In Slovakia, a considerable role was played by religious survivals which were misused by Ludakism.* These strata were for scores of years politically and culturally oriented upon the West. All this created in this country fertile ground for the infiltration and application of opportunist and revisionist tendencies.

The discussion preceding the 13th Party Congress pointed out many shortcomings and mistakes which had to be solved, but the Party leadership did not manage consistently to generalize the experience gained by the Party in the preceding development and to adopt such conclusions in the political sphere and as regards cadres which would make it possible to eliminate these shortcomings. In spite of this, the resolution of the 13th Congress of the CPCz in 1966 oriented the Party on the whole in the correct direc-

* Ludakism was a reactionary political current of the former adherents of the Hlinka's late people's party.

tion. Its conclusions provide broad possibilities for a consistent implementation of the leading role of the Party and of Leninist methods in the direction of the Party and society.

However, the resolution of the 13th Congress was not thoroughly elaborated and, on the contrary, in many cases there was a retreat from it. This fact was made use of by rightist and revisionist forces. They formed into a gradually growing current which was coming into existence long before the 13th Congress from among the ranks of petty-bourgeois elements and representatives of the defeated bourgeoisie. These elements penetrated also the Party, especially the ideological sector and the mass media of communication. They were joined by people who lost their head in face of difficulties and faith in the revolutionary perspective, by various "theoreticians" who went over from extreme dogmatism to revisionism.

The internal onset of the rightist forces is closely linked with the ideological centres of anti-communism throughout the world. Their longterm activities, as well as methods of ideological subversion

and of various psychological operations were purposefully concentrated on the gradual erosion of all fundamental values of socialism in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (ČSSR), and on strengthening the influence of revisionism in the internal organism of the Party. These centres applied common tactics against the ČSSR, making use of her internal weakening which resulted from the growth of certain crisis phenomena within the CPCz.

The aim of these anti-communist circles was to revive the remnants of bourgeois views, to evoke illusions about capitalism, to promote nationalism and anti-Soviet moods, to throw doubt upon the leading role of the Party and the leading position of the working class, the class conception of the revolutionary struggle and principles of socialism in general.

The Party was not sufficiently prepared and armed to meet this concentrated, well organized, co-ordinated and controlled attack of the internal and external revisionist and rightist opportunist forces. The danger of the penetration of rightist opportunism and revisionism was under-rated, ideological work was marked by inadmissible defensive-

ness and tolerance. The threat of ideological subversion was actually often pointed out by words, but this was not followed by concrete steps. The education of Party members and other working people in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism was weakened. Gradually, the Party was being ideologically disarmed. Theoretical work in the Party was for many years neglected and suffered from a superficial formalistic approach to ideological work among Party members. Even such theoretical institutes of the Party as the Historical Institute of the CPCz, the Party College, the Institute of Political Sciences were long before 1968 active bearers of many revisionist conceptions. Part of the blame for this state of affairs lies with J. Hendrych and V. Koucký who in the past period were responsible for this section of Party work. Greatest damage in this field was caused by V. Slavík and Č. Císař who fully opened the door to right opportunism.

A salient open attempt to establish a revisionist anti-Party and anti-socialist platform were the addresses organized by the rightist group of writers around A. J. Liehm, P. Kohout, M. Kundera,

K. Kosík, L. Vaculík and J. Procházka at the 4th Writers' Congress, with the aim of securing for this platform public support.

The sound Marxist-Leninist current in the Party was aware of the gravity of the situation. It made sincere efforts to achieve a solution of the shortcomings, demanded their rectification and was ready to devote all its forces to it. It expressed the views of the decisive majority of the Party. However, the Party leadership did not understand and support this sincere effort, and did not put itself at the head of this current.

Although there was even within the leadership a differentiation of views, the political course was determined primarily by the standpoints of A. Novotný who had no feeling at all for conceptual work, indiscriminately rejected critical voices and did not differentiate between well-meant criticism and rightist attacks. He frequently adopted a sharper stand against those forces which tried to create a sound situation in the Party than against rightist elements. Instead of putting himself at the head of the Marxist-Leninist current, he objectively obstructed efforts of

the Party to achieve a creative application of the conclusions of the 13th Congress, ideological and action unity and a strengthening of the leading role of the Party. Many conclusions of the Central Committee and the Presidium were weakened by A. Novotný's inconsistency and one-side interpretation, whereby he was throwing them into doubt although he had earlier expressed agreement with them. A. Novotný's faults stemmed from some of his personal qualities, from his violation of collective leadership, his conceit, subjectivism, megalomania and suspicion of people, and they were no doubt also caused by the uncritical approach on the part of some of his closest collaborators. This is why the efforts to find a way out of the situation and to activate the Party concentrated on the question of his departure from the leading Party function.

In the course of the February, May, September and October sessions of the CC CPCz in 1967, the contradictions which were until then smouldering below the surface, came openly to the fore at the supreme Party forum. However, in these contradictions, justified criticism of the situation, and

partly also of its causes, was already mingled with opportunist speeches of certain members of the Central Committee against the fundamental principles of the Party and socialism.

The plenary session of the CC CPCz of October 1967, on the position and the role of the Party, became an important stage. A great role in the preparation of this session was played by broad, representative survey of the attitudes of the Party public, in which around 600 basic Party organizations expressed their views on topical questions of Party work. The results of this survey contained grave warnings, drawing attention to contradictions between proclaimed aims and achieved results, to manifestations of bureaucracy, to the suppression of inner-Party democracy, to the low level of discipline and growing passivity of communists, to the insufficient contact of the leading bodies with basic organizations, to the inconsistent solution of economic problems. At the same time, the results of this survey rejected the denigration of the history and work of the Party, petty-bourgeois negativism and anti-Soviet attacks and revisionism. They were an open and sharp

criticism of the Party leadership, but at the same time the expression of the will and determination of the Party to overcome the accumulated difficulties.

At the October plenum of 1967, the contradictions existing within the Central Committee as regards the evaluation of the situation and the choice of solution came already openly to the fore. By his speech at the plenum, A. Novotný set against himself the great majority of members of the Central Committee and brought the situation to such a head that changes in the leadership could not be delayed. The Central Committee broached but did not fully solve the fundamental problems concerning Party policy, the activities of the Central Committee and its bodies.

At the December plenum, the greater part of Central Committee members criticized A. Novotný's methods of work and ways of management, and demanded a critical and self-critical analysis of the policy and the work of the Central Committee, the Presidium and the Secretariat of the CC CPCz.

The discussion centred around the situation in the Party and the necessity to take principled measures against shortcomings in the implementation of the

resolution of the 13th Party Congress, including A. Novotný's departure from the function of First Secretary.

The tenacity with which A. Novotný defended his personal position resulted in the fact that the forces and the attention of the Central Committee concentrated primarily on the solution of the question of Party leadership. This resulted, inter alia, in the fact that the plenum did not expose in time the platform of those members of the Central Committee who in the discussion and assessing the situation and the further course of the Party proceeded essentially from anti-Party, revisionist positions (O. Šik, V. Slavík, F. Vodsloň, J. Smrkovský and others).

The interruption of the deliberations of the December plenum without concrete conclusions, and its postponement to the beginning of January, intensified to the extreme the tension not only within the Central Committee and the Party aktiv, but also within the entire Party and society.

It was only when A. Novotný realized that in spite of all manoeuvring and attempts he could not gain support of the majority in the Central Committee,

that after extensive, open and often contradictory six-day discussions he accepted at the January plenum the proposed solution and was in accordance with the Party Rules released from the function of First Secretary of the CC CPCz.

After long deliberations and controversial proposals, the Central Committee unanimously elected to the function of First Secretary A. Dubček. This election was a compromise solution. Many actually knew some of his shortcomings, but his choice was influenced by the then existing relations within the leadership as well as by the effort to select a candidate at whose election it would be possible to achieve unity. The proposal to elect him was submitted on behalf of the Presidium, on behalf of the consultative group (which was created by the plenum from among representatives of regional organizations because the Presidium itself could not reach any conclusion on this question), and in his own name, by A. Novotný. The Central Committee further supplemented the Presidium by the election of certain new members.

The plenum adopted a political resolution which unequivocally espoused the conclusions of the

13th Party Congress, and again emphasized that we are part of the world socialist system and our firm unity with the Soviet Union. It stressed the need to deepen the unity of the Party, to eliminate mistakes and shortcomings, and to strengthen the leading role of the Party, the need to observe the Leninist norms, to strengthen the bonds between the Czechs and Slovaks by consistent implementation of Leninist principles in nationality policy, to solve problems of the national economy and other tasks designed to ensure the realization of the 13th Congress.

However, the January plenum also showed grave contradictory tendencies. The forces proceeding from the principles of Marxism-Leninism, and which relied on the resolution of the 13th Congress and defended the necessity to continue along the set line, endeavoured to find an answer to topical questions, to eliminate shortcomings and errors of the past and to mobilize the whole Party to activity which would correspond to the matured problems. On the other hand, however, – as has been confirmed by further development – the rightist revisionist group formed already at the January plenum a

group which, under the cloak of the rectification of mistakes was striving for a revision of the general line of the Party, for the disruption of the ideological and organizational principles of Party structure, for the destruction of the political structure of socialist society to the benefit of petty-bourgeois spontaneity, and for a change in the foreign political orientation of the ČSSR.

The new Party leadership was faced by the enormously serious task and historic responsibility before its own Party, the people and the international communist movement:

- to utilize and transform the spontaneous agreement of the Party and the people with the solution of the January plenum for developing a broad activity aimed at overcoming the obstacles obstructing the further development of socialism in the ČSSR;
- not to permit any abuse of the efforts of the Party to rectify shortcomings, and to wage an offensive ideological and political struggle against opportunist, revisionist and anti-socialist views, tendencies and forces. This principled orientation was all the more urgent as there existed the threat that the overcoming

of the grave shortcomings of the Novotný leadership – unless accompanied by a resolute struggle against revisionism – would lead to a growth of the rightist danger which had already made itself noticeable in certain speeches at the January plenum;

- to strengthen even further our ties with the socialist countries, especially with the Soviet Union, so that Czechoslovakia may be a firm and reliable link of the world socialist system.

The results of the January plenum were fundamentally an expression of the necessity to solve the matured crisis in the CPCz and to remove from the activities of the Party, and especially from its leadership, that which prevented the Party and society from rising to new activity, to a new upsurge. This applied in particular to the consistent implementation of Leninist principles in the management of the Party and society, and to the necessity to react in time to new phenomena in all spheres of social life, which emerged as a result of development. This was the spirit in which the results of the January plenum were received by the overwhelming majority of the Party and our people.

II

After January 1968 it became, however, evident that the new Party leadership, headed by A. Dubček, was in view of its heterogeneity, political disunity and overall weakness incapable of fulfilling this task. The position of the Presidium of the CC CPCz was from the very beginning weakened by the fact that its members continued to include certain comrades who were responsible for past shortcomings and deformations, as well as by the fact that those elected to it comprised J. Špaček and J. Borůvka who very shortly proved to be exponents of the right wing. However, the decisive fact was – as has been shown by further developments – that especially A. Dubček did not have the prerequisites for grasping the complicated character of the situation and the risk connected with the change in the leadership under political and economic conditions existing at that time in the Party and society.

His indecision and hesitance resulted in the fact that the Party leadership did not rely on the confidence of the overwhelming majority of members of

the CC CPCz and on the support of the majority of communists, and did not put itself at the head of the Marxist-Leninist forces which had been striving already for many years for an improvement in the work of the Party. The great potential source of energy for the development of socialism, represented by the initiative and the hopes which the January plenum evoked in the people, was wasted and even misused by the rightist forces. Instead of taking the initiative and assuming firm control of developments, the Party leadership from the first moments permitted things to proceed spontaneously and made possible the organized onset of the right wing.

The Party did not have a clear line and an explicit directive for its further course in the decisive spheres. It is characteristic that the Party leadership did not even issue a directive for the preparation of the annual plenary membership meetings and of the district conferences. This gradually resulted in the fact that the leading Party bodies ceased to apply the principles of democratic centralism even in the sphere of cadre policy. They did not control the

lower Party bodies and the Party apparatus and, on the contrary, permitted a weakening of Party discipline and of all organizing activities of the Party and the State.

In the first weeks after the January plenum, the right wing examined the ground and possibilities, rallied forces and allies, cautiously advanced and determined its tactics. When it saw the indecision of the leadership and found out that it could turn A. Dubček by various pressures and adulation into its shield, it began to enshroud him with an atmosphere of messianism and went over to a broadly organized attack. In February and March, it already organized – without energetic resistance and intervention on the part of leading Party bodies – a number of its public actions and endeavoured to disorientate the Party and other working people by distorted information on the results of the January plenum. In this, it made use mainly of the fact that the resolution of the January plenum of the CC CPCz was not published.

At that time, the most active representatives of the right wing within the CC CPCz, O. Šik, F. Krie-

gel, J. Špaček, V. Slavík, J. Smrkovský, F. Vodsloň, J. Borůvka, V. Prchlík and others began to present to the public a revisionist interpretation of the meaning of the January plenum and to give themselves the false aura of the “Men of January”. These speeches, which violated the principles of democratic centralism, became at the same time the impulse for a campaign unleashed by the mass media of communication. In these media the right wing had already before January important positions which it further strengthened in this period and turned them into the main weapon of attacks against the Party and the socialist State. This was made possible, inter alia, by the fact that the leadership of the Party and State essentially abandoned their management and control.

By its domination of the decisive mass media the right wing virtually secured the possibility of monopolizing the interpretation of the meaning and the aims of the January plenum in its own spirit. At the same time, it gave its campaign the semblance as if it were in support of a “new” policy of the Party, as if it were a fight for a “new” and “better” socialism.

This made it also possible that apart from people who had never accepted Socialism and apart from open enemies of the system, a great number of honest citizens rallied around these slogans.

The right wing took advantage of A. Novotný's great unpopularity, of the fact that he bore the main responsibility for the mistakes of the past period. It made also skilful use of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Party and society in principle rejected a return to the methods used by A. Novotný. It employed his attempts to defend his standpoint for creating a psychosis of a threat on the part of the „conservatives,” as the main danger for the post-January development. At the same time, it gave the label of a conservative to everyone who defended the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

This development evoked ever growing concern not only within the Party but also among the broad public. The great number of letters sent by Party members and the standpoints they voiced at membership meetings, as well as the resolutions from Party bodies and organizations which were at that time sent to the Central Committee of the Party,

showed that communists, but also many non-Party members, did not agree with the campaign aimed at discrediting the Party and at disparaging the results achieved, nor with the growing anti-Soviet attacks. They demanded clear-cut words and deeds from the Party leadership, which would put an end to the growing anti-Party and anti-socialist attacks.

An open measuring of strength with the rightist opportunist forces within the Party took place at the district conferences held in March. The attempt of the right wing to secure control of the key positions in the district Party committees failed in view of the resistance put up by the sound forces. However, the right wing immediately organized a campaign in the mass media in which it labelled every opponent as a “conservative” and adversary of the January plenum, and stepped up the atmosphere of intimidation. Under the slogan that “a new policy can be pursued only with new people”, honest and tested functionaries were removed from their functions and were replaced by people who had mostly stood aloof from the construction of socialism. Certain functionaries of the pre-January

period really proved to be incapable of coping with their task and should have been justly replaced, but under the pressure of the right wing, functionaries were being "shot off" ever more frequently merely because they took a stand in defending the Party and socialism.

Around the factional core of the revisionist rightist forces within the Party, there rallied an opposition current which gradually penetrated into an ever greater number of organizations and was creating its own political platform and organizational structure. The right wing gradually occupied important positions at all levels by placing there its own people or those who, for various reasons, went over to it and capitulated before it. It skillfully applied combined pressure from above – from the leading bodies of the Party and the State – and from below by means of the mass media, by organizing meetings, various resolutions, signature campaigns and so on, which were passed off as the standpoint of the Party and the working people, although they were often inspired by small groups or individuals. The failure of the Party leadership to give directions to Party bo-

dies resulted in the fact that part of the functionaries did not fully discern the intentions of the rightists, while another part was withdrawing from the battle. This enabled the right wing, during the second stage of the district conferences, to penetrate by means of gross violation of the Party Rules into important positions of the district link of the Party. In view of the fact that the forces faithful to Marxism-Leninism did not get support from the leading bodies of the Party and, with a few exceptions, did not even have the possibility of stating their views in public, they gradually found themselves on the defensive and in isolation.

Since the leading bodies of the CPCz virtually ceased to control the Party and the mass media, the trend of political development in the country was being increasingly determined not by the Party leadership but by the right wing. The fact that the attack against the foundations of socialism was led by people who mostly held a Party card, was taken by the public as if there were a clash between those who were in support of January and those who were against it, between „progressive“ and „conservative“

communists, between those who wanted to improve the functioning of society and those who were defending outdated methods. This wrong picture was continuously instilled into the minds of the people by the mass media. This was the reason why they gradually managed to deceive a rather wide range of the public and to obscure the fact that this was in reality a class struggle, an attack against the very existence of socialism. In this way, rightist propaganda succeeded in misleading even numerous groups of honest working people in our country. It was also considerably successful among a relatively large part of the intelligentsia, especially its humanitarian part.

The logic of political struggle induced the right wing to make even more aggressive efforts to recruit as its ally against the Party those political forces from among the ranks of the former petty bourgeoisie which had been until then balancing on the fringe of socialist society, and even openly anti-communist forces. This resulted in the creation of a political bloc of rightist revisionist and anti-socialist forces. Its individual components actually

differed in their ideology and tactics, but they united in the decisive fight against the Party and the alliance with the Soviet Union.

Imperialism was in this way given the opportunity to realize in the ČSSR, in the spirit of its global strategy and tactics, the aims which it had been elaborating over a long period against the socialist countries. This is why this bloc, under whose general onslaught the managing structure of the Party, the socialist State and society began to gradually disintegrate, found all-round political, moral and material support from the imperialist forces.

Czechoslovakia has already since February 1948 been the object of broadly based political and ideological subversion on the part of imperialism which, however, did not yield the expected distinct results in a situation when the Party held developments firmly in its hands. After the rightist opportunist and anti-socialist forces in this country started to openly attack the basic principles of the Party and socialism and when their disruptive activities ceased to meet with active resistance, external imperialist activity, too, could pass over to a vigorous onslaught.

This was also the essence of the sharp class struggle which was not by far based only on the historic specificities of our society, but was primarily the expression of long-term interest and intensive efforts of world reaction to secure control over Czechoslovakia. These activities were also joined by the post-February emigration, centred around the notorious Pavel Tigrid whose conceptions of a "gradual weakening" of the structure of the socialist system and other "theories" on the necessity to internally disrupt the leading role of the Party, provided the bloc of rightist revisionists and anti-socialist forces with the ideological weapons with which it identified itself and which it put purposefully into life.

The April 1968 session of the CC CPCz showed already quite openly the weakness and disunity of the post-January leadership as well as the shift of power in favour of the right wing.

In the discussion at the plenum, the Marxist-Leninist forces of the Central Committee of the CPCz drew attention to the negative developments. They succeeded in having Ludvík Svoboda, a great

patriot, hero of the anti-fascist struggle and an outstanding champion of the friendship and alliance with the USSR, nominated to the Presidency, rather than the candidates of the right forces, J. Smrkovský and Č. Císař. However, when the Presidium and Secretariat of the CC, the government and other state bodies were being reorganized, people who later acted as exponents of the right forces, were nominated and approved for decisive posts in the bodies of power, for the posts of chairman of the government and chairmen of the National Front and the National Assembly.

The resolution of the April plenum, as a matter of fact, warned against the danger of spontaneity in the post-January development, but the fundamental questions – the unity and capacity of the Party to act, the exposure of the rightist danger as well as the proclamation of a resolute fight against it – remained unsolved. The Action Programme, which was approved by the April plenum, already reflected the intensified disruptive activities of the right wing within the Party. It contains non-Marxist formulations about the role of the Party, the State and socialist

society, about the so-called partnership conception of the National Front, about the management of the economy and culture, as well as other theses of opportunist and revisionist character. It is a document which is a considerable step back in the theoretical, political and organizational sphere as compared with similar Party documents of programme character which had been adopted by the Party in the past. The Central Committee, therefore, considers the Action Programme to be an incorrect and invalid document which cannot be used as basis in the theoretical activities and the practical policy of the Party.

Both at the April plenum and in public, the right wing attempted to express non-confidence in the CC CPCz. At the same time it raised the demand for convening an extraordinary, so-called "cadre" congress with the aim of taking hold of the supreme body of the Party. This demand was, however, resolutely rejected by the great majority of the Central Committee.

After the April plenum, the regional Party conferences came to the forefront of political struggle.

The Presidium of the Central Committee had again the opportunity to rally at these conferences the forces of the Party and to take the initiative into its own hands. However, this opportunity was not used through the fault of the rightist group in the leadership. It was typical that no uniform and clear directive was issued either for the preparation of the regional conferences or for the speeches of the heads of the Central Committee delegations. The right wing intended to use these conferences to gain further positions and to secure a majority in support of its demand for convening an extraordinary congress. However, in spite of all its efforts, the demand for convening an extraordinary congress was directly supported only by the City Conference in Prague, where A. Dubček, O. Černík and J. Smrkovský made ineffective speeches and did not contrive to successfully defend the resolution of the Central Committee plenum, and by the South-Moravian regional conference which was tricked by Špaček, who presented a distorted interpretation of the standpoint held by the Central Committee. Most resolute opposition to the standpoint of the right

wing was expressed by the regional conferences in Slovakia.

The right wing therefore continued to broaden the front of its onslaught on Party bodies, on the decisive components of the Party and State apparatus, on social organizations and on ideological life. The oppositional, so-called second centre in the Party, which was formed on the basis of the City Committee of the CPCz in Prague, coordinated and unified organizationally, politically and ideologically the activities of various opposition groups, determined united tactics and the method of the anti-Party struggle. Certain members of the Presidium, the Secretariat and the plenum of the Party Central Committee, such as, for instance, F. Kriegel, J. Smrkovský, J. Špaček, Č. Císař, V. Slavík, O. Šik, V. Prchlík, Z. Mlynář, F. Vodslon, B. Šimon, J. Borůvka, M. Vaculík also were, or later became, representatives of this centre. Rightist groupings emerged also in the regions and districts. Their structure was at the same time built up in such a way as to comprise and facilitate the influence of the right wing in important Party bodies and significant

components of its apparatus, in decisive centres of social sciences, in the mass media, in the sphere of education, science and culture, as well as in important links of the State apparatus.

The final aims of the rightist and anti-socialist forces in Slovakia were identical with the designs of the right wing in the Czech regions. However, in the leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia, in the regional and district committees of the Communist Party of Slovakia, as well as among the intelligentsia there formed forces which waged a persistent struggle against the activities of the rightist and anti-socialist bloc. The rightist forces in Slovakia did not, until August 1968, fully manage to form their ranks upon an organized and all-embracing platform. This was also due to the sound core in the Party leadership headed by comrade Vasil Biľak who in the function of First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia took a stand based unequivocally on positions of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, openly exposed the aims of the rightist and anti-

socialist forces, defended the positions of the Party and our ties of alliance with the Soviet Union.

In spite of this, a dangerous situation emerged gradually also in Slovakia; just as in other parts of the Republic, this situation was characterized by the activities of rightist and anti-socialist forces.

All these deep political shifts throughout the Republic found also their expression in the May Day celebrations, which in a number of places lost the internationalist class character and changed into a motley mixture of most various political currents of rightist and anti-socialist forces. At the May Day parades, especially in Prague, pronouncedly anti-communist forces made already their appearance with their slogans, forces represented primarily by counter-revolutionary organizations like KAN and K 231.

At the beginning of May this growing danger was already so evident that when the Presidium of the CC CPCz held a general discussion on the political situation in the country, on May 7 and 8, even its rightist part was under the pressure of arguments of the Marxist-Leninist core forced to admit that

the Party and socialism were threatened by grave danger as a result of the activities of the rightist, anti-socialist and anti-Soviet forces. The state-wide conference of leading regional and district secretaries, which was convened to check the correctness of these conclusions, not only confirmed this but showed the situation in the country in an even sharper light. A few days later, the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia expressed in the same spirit its own standpoint which, however, A. Dubček did not permit to be published.

However, in the preparation of the May plenum of the CC CPCz the right wing, too, exerted considerable activity in order to thwart its aims. The group of the Prague centre elaborated a complex rightist conception which was in contradiction with the evaluation and the conclusions of the Presidium, and in this way passed over to factional activities. This conception was presented at a conference of leading regional and district Party secretaries on behalf of the City Party Committee in Prague by B. Šimon. Under the demand of creating a Czech Communist Party and a Czech National Council

which would be controlled by the rightist forces, it was aimed at complete seizure of power in the Party and the State.

In order to mislead and thus also temporarily to win over the working class, the majority of which was until then resisting the rightist demagogy, O. Šik – without any knowledge and consent of Party and State bodies – came out with the demand to form councils of working people. This proposal was part of the conception aimed at the destruction of the managing economic structure and at crushing the socialist system of planning, at creating a counter-balance to and the weakening of the positions of Party organizations in enterprises. At the same time, there was instigated a wave of social demagogy and unrestrained pressures for increases in wages which were forced regardless of the results in production, frequently under the threat of wild-cat strikes. All this called forth an inflationary wave and the threat of disruption in the economy. At the same time, it was demagogically declared that the only salvation from economic catastrophe can be a large loan in dollars.

At the May 1968 plenum of the CC CPCz, the gravity of the situation was reflected even in the opening speech of A. Dubček. Although he presented the conclusions of the Presidium of the CC CPCz in a diluted form, he was forced to admit the existence of efforts aimed at the moral discreditation of the whole Party and to warn against the danger “that we should not open up scope to non-socialist or even anti-revolutionary forces”.

The resolution of the May plenum noted that the main danger for the Party had become the rightist danger which, however, was narrowed down merely to threat from anti-socialist and anti-communist forces operating outside the Party. Although the discussion at the Central Committee brought about clashes with the rightist opportunists, the role of the rightist forces in the Party was not exposed in A. Dubček's concluding speech nor in the resolution. In spite of these shortcomings, the conclusions of the plenum could have brought positive results if the Party leadership had consistently implemented them.

The May plenum also brought about a change in

the attitude to the question of convening an extraordinary congress. This change was based on the intention of the Marxist-Leninist forces to take the initiative into their own hands, by speeding up the convocation of the congress. The prerequisite of this would, of course, have been a united and principled course of the entire Party leadership, which was not achieved.

Following the May plenum, the activity of the Marxist-Leninist forces increased. Hundreds of thousands of Party members and functionaries supported the resolution of the May plenum at aktivs and meetings, and demanded resolute measures in defence of socialism. The attempts to achieve a positive turn in developments culminated in the State-wide aktiv of the People's Militia in Prague, which was attended by more than 11 000 members. This aktiv was the expression of the fact that the People's Militia as a whole had not, at that time, succumbed to the onslaught of the right wing, that it continued to adhere to the principles of Marxism-Leninism and friendship with the Soviet Union and that it was determined to defend the cause of socialism.

In the period of preparations for the 14th Extraordinary Party Congress, which was characterized by an atmosphere of hysteria, intimidation and terror, a decisive struggle was waged for the Party between the Marxist-Leninist forces and the right wing.

The open and co-ordinated onslaught of the reactionary forces found its expression in the publication of the counter-revolutionary platform of 2000 words, which was a forthright instigation to violent actions and to the destruction of the socialist system. This counter-revolutionary appeal went at the same time farthest in stirring up hatred against the Soviet Union, and even expressed a public threat against our allies with armed conflict.

The deliberate publication of this counter-revolutionary pamphlet on the eve of the district conferences influenced their course and the election of delegates to the regional conferences. In spite of the negative standpoint of the Presidium of the Central Committee, which, however, its rightist members – A. Dubček, J. Smrkovský, F. Kriegel and also O. Černík – immediately sabotaged, roughly half of

the district conferences in the Czech regions came out in support of the 2000 words.

In the period of the extraordinary regional Party conferences, the full transision of the right wing to open factional activities became already markedly evident. The second centre in the Party endeavoured to isolate the leftist forces in the existing Central Committee, and by sending down instructions to the regions to predetermine the results of elections of delegates to the Congress and the composition of the new Central Committee. It managed to achieve that the delegates to the 14th extraordinary Party Congress included many rightist opportunists, nationalists and wavering members of the Party. Merely 17.4 per cent of the delegates were workers, which is without parallel in the history of the CPCz. In this way the right wing created conditions for seizing power at the Congress and for legalizing its aims and intentions.

The anti-communist and anti-socialist forces organized open demonstrations, provocations and actions of clearly anarchistic character. They intensified the nationalist, anti-Soviet wave, especially in connec-

tion with the staff manoeuvres of the allied troops in Czechoslovakia. They made efforts to achieve the disbandment of the People's Militia.

The chauvinistic campaign against the letter addressed by the People's Militia to the Soviet people, and especially the frantic attacks against the 99 Praga factory workers, who in their letter expressed their faithfulness to socialism and friendship with the Soviet Union, were salient evidence of the emerging white terror. Anti-Sovietism and its attendant misuse of national feelings were the unifying platform of the right wing and the counter-revolution.

The fight for power became also a fight for a change in the foreign-political orientation of the ČSSR. The rightist opportunist and anti-socialist bloc made efforts to liquidate the basic guarantees of the national and State existence of socialist Czechoslovakia, which lie in the alliance and friendship with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. This should have created external conditions for the liquidation of socialism in Czechoslovakia.

These and many other facts document the connection between the events in Czechoslovakia and

the fight of international imperialism against the socialist community. The strategists in the centres of world anti-communism had their direct assistants in socialist Czechoslovakia. One of them, I. Sviták, became the spokesman of extreme reactionary forces which were aligning themselves in such organizations as K 231 and the Club of Committed Non-Party Members (KAN). Their programme was the liquidation of the achievements of February 1948 and the virtual liquidation of socialism. The centre of K 231 was headed by K. Nigrin, J. Brodský, V. Paleček, O. Rambousek and others who were mostly direct agents of western intelligence services. The founders of KAN were, in addition to I. Sviták, the writer V. Havel and Professor V. Černý, who had close contacts with the post-February emigration. KAN and K 231 were tightly linked with western intelligence services and were given not only political but also material support.

A considerable influence in the fight against socialism in the ČSSR was exerted by forces which committed themselves from the positions of zionism, one of the tools of international imperialism and anti-

communism. Their leading representatives in the country were F. Kriegel, J. Pelikán, A. Lustig, E. Goldstücker, A. J. Liehm, E. Löbl, K. Winter and many others.

An important role in anti-communist plans based on the demagoguery with so-called democratic socialism was held by the re-emerging Social Democratic Party. This Party was preparing to appear as an independent political force, playing upon the social-democratic survivals in the thinking of a part of members of the CPCz whom it wanted to bring over to its side. It was calculated that the Social Democratic Party, "unburdened with the period of the construction of socialism", would be attractive for the disoriented and politically unfirm part of society. With the agreement and the support of rightist functionaries of the CPCz, F. Kriegel, J. Smrkovský, Z. Mlynář, J. Litera, L. Lis and others, an illegal preparatory central committee was created, whose members were, inter alia, Z. Bechyně, J. Munzar, O. Janýr, F. Šupka. At the same time, preparatory committees constituted themselves in the regions and districts and at some places there were also set up

basic organizations. These activities, which were developed in close co-operation with leaders of the Socialist International, had the task of achieving a political split among the working class. Programmes of further activities aimed at negating the leading role of the CPCz and at restoring the old bourgeois-democratic and clerical basis were worked out also in the other parties associated in the National Front, in the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, the Czechoslovak People's Party, the Slovak Revival Party and the Freedom Party.

An important role in the anti-socialist game involving the fate of Czechoslovakia fell to the reactionary representatives of the Catholic clergy who were amply supported by the Catholic emigration living abroad.

The combined actions of foreign and internal reactionary forces were deepening the inner-political crisis which was ever more reflected in the relations with our closest allies.

The fraternal parties, especially the CPSU, endeavoured with great patience to eliminate the tension in mutual relations and to convince the leadership

of our Party that it is necessary to resist the counter-revolutionary threat in the ČSSR. To this end they made use of all possibilities provided by official and personal contacts. At the meetings in Dresden, Sofia and Moscow, in the first half of 1968, their representatives showed A. Dubček on the basis of concrete facts that the situation in the ČSSR was developing in a dangerous direction which, at the same time, endangered the common interests of the socialist camp. A. Dubček's assurances that the leadership of the CPCz was also aware of the gravity of the situation and that it itself felt the need to redress the situation were, however, at home suppressed, evaded and not fulfilled. The minutes of the talks with Comrade L. I. Brezhnev, Comrade J. Kádár and other comrades, as well as a whole series of letters which the General Secretary of the CPSU and the First Secretaries of other fraternal parties sent to A. Dubček and to the leadership of our Party, just as the telephone talks show quite clearly how sincerely and deeply the parties and the people of the fraternal socialist countries were agitated by the difficulties in our inner-political life and the danger which was

developing into a threat to the existence of socialism in Czechoslovakia. They offered comradely support and assistance for coping with the situation and exhausted all political means which came into consideration in order to rouse A. Dubček and his followers to adopting a responsible communist course.

The leading representatives of the rightist opportunist forces were actually officially proclaiming a policy of friendship with the socialist countries, but they hypocritically covered up and in fact supported efforts to drown and blunt the traditional and deep friendship of our nations for the people of the Soviet Union. In an effort to block any attempt to reach understanding and to restore mutual confidence between the CPCz and the fraternal parties of the socialist countries, the rightist forces pushed through the non-participation of the delegation of the CPCz at the Warsaw meeting of the fraternal parties in July 1968, and in this way set out on a course towards a rupture with the allies.

In spite of the resistance of some of its members, the presidium of the CC CPCz recklessly rejected

the Warsaw letter and chose a course directed against the very interest of our Party and socialism. The reply of the Presidium concealed the gravity of the rightist and counter-revolutionary danger, to which our allies had comradely drawn attention in their letter. At variance with the resolution of the May plenum, the reply of the Presidium even declared that the main danger for our society was "conservatism".

In an extremely tense situation in the Party and in society, the July plenum of the CC CPCz was convened, which, however, did not any more find sufficient strength and courage to oppose the incorrect course of the Presidium of the CC CPCz and even confirmed its standpoint. This contributed considerably towards deepening the disorientation among communists and in our entire society. The fundamentally incorrect resolution of the July 1968 plenum was annulled only by the plenum of the CC CPCz in September 1969.

The fraternal parties were patiently striving for talks with representatives of the CPCz, in order to achieve a solution of the complicated problems in

mutual relations which emerged as a result of the growth of the counter-revolutionary situation in Czechoslovakia and of the threat to the interests of socialism. At the talks in Čierná n. T., the political bureau of the CC CPSU appealed to the leadership of our Party that it should realize its communist and internationalist responsibilities and solve the dangerous situation in Czechoslovakia with its own forces.

The attitudes of individual members of the Presidium of the CC CPCz were fundamentally different. The rightist representatives did not go to the talks in Čierná with honest intentions. Between themselves, they made no secret of the intention to once more deceive our most faithful allies in order to gain time up to the 14th Congress of the CPCz which was to bring them definitive victory. They hypocritically pretended that they were determined to take urgently necessary measures against the anti-socialist forces and counter-revolutionary organizations. They also played the same role in Bratislava, at the meeting of representatives of the six socialist countries.

After the talks in Čierná n. T. and in Bratislava A. Dubček and his followers in the leadership of the CPCz adopted the tactics of procrastination and delaying the realization of the measures they had promised to take at the talks with the allies. Moreover, they distorted the results of the talks and presented them as their victory. A. Dubček not only ignored but even kept secret from the leadership of the CPCz the justified apprehensions of the fraternal parties for the fates of socialism in Czechoslovakia and of peace in Europe. Together with other rightist representatives in the Party leadership, he prevented the convening of a plenary session of the CC CPCz which was urgently necessary in this difficult and complicated period. He hypocritically betrayed the principle which he had solemnly co-signed in Bratislava, that the "support, protection and strengthening of the socialist achievements which the nations have achieved by their heroic efforts, by the selfless work of the people of each country, are the joint internationalist duty of all socialist countries".

III

The designs and aims of the counter-revolution in Czechoslovakia were analogical to those in Hungary in 1956, merely the tactics were different in view of the different conditions and time. The anti-socialist forces in our country, which acted in harmony with the designs of contemporary imperialism, oriented themselves primarily upon using methods of political, ideological and power destruction and on the gradual implementation of the counter-revolutionary aims within a longer period of time than was the case in Hungary. However, in our country, too, these forces anticipated that at an appropriate time, in case their plans should meet with resistance, they would unleash even physical terror against Marxist-Leninist cadres and against citizens devoted to the cause of socialism.

Today, it is already, on the basis of gained knowledge, possible to answer the question of how the threat to the revolutionary achievements of our people was growing and why the counter-revolutionary course of events was not halted and the cause of

socialism in the ČSSR defended by internal forces, either by way of political struggle or with the help of our own means of power.

The process of developing the socialist revolution has under conditions of the existence of the world system of socialism its objective laws and binding criteria which, with due respect to national specificities, determine the character of socialist power and are the condition of steady revolutionary development of social progress. Violation of these laws seriously harms the interests of socialism and, if they are altogether negated and rejected, such a course becomes essentially anti-socialist and counter-revolutionary. The permanent and unalterable values of socialism include:

- the leading position of the working class and its vanguard – the Communist Party;
- the role of the socialist State as the instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat;
- Marxist-Leninist ideology and its application through all media influencing the masses;
- socialist social ownership of the means of pro-

duction and principles of planned management of the national economy;
– the principles of proletarian internationalism and their consistent implementation in foreign policy, especially in relation to the Soviet Union.

Developments after January 1968 confirm that the right wing was leading a purposive attack against all basic values and norms of socialism and that it was systematically disrupting the Party and the entire political socialist system. This broadly based onslaught was facilitated by the fact that A. Dubček, who initially enjoyed confidence in the Party and in the country, was gradually retreating from Marxist-Leninist positions and was getting in the tow of rightist opportunist and anti-socialist forces, until he eventually became their symbol.

1. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia gradually ceased to be in 1968 the managing centre of the socialist social system. Under the deposit of revisionism it was losing the character of a Marxist-Leninist party, which made it impossible for it to assert the leading role in society. In consequence of the negation of the principles of democratic centra-

lism, the Party was gradually deprived of its capacity to act. The CC CPCz was as a whole eliminated from taking decisions on cardinal questions which according to the Party Rules are within its exclusive competence.

The conduct of the rightist and the wavering part of the Presidium and of the Secretariat of the CC CPCz contributed to the fact that the absolute majority of regional and district Party Committees and Party organizations of many large enterprises eventually came under the control of aggressive rightist groups. The rightist representatives of the Presidium and of the Secretariat of the CC CPCz, as well as certain heads of departments of the CC CPCz became spokesmen of the bloc of revisionist and nationalist forces, paralysed the political activity of the working class and its resistance against the growing counter-revolutionary plot in the country. They were clearing the field for the disruptive activities of the rightist and anti-socialist forces and in this way contributed to the creation of an atmosphere of pressure and fear.

The rightist part of the leadership of the CPCz not only tolerated but even instigated general attacks

against the Party apparatus, paralysed its activities and the work of elected bodies. The Party apparatus was at the same time being replaced by various commissions and aktivs which in reality were pressure groups of the rightist elements. Decisions on the composition of these commissions and on the aktivs were not taken in Party bodies. In the Party apparatus and elsewhere, various opportunists and career-seekers were elbowing their way to the forefront, who, in an effort to win favour of the rightists, slandered and vilified the activities of the Party and its glorious revolutionary history.

The degree of disintegration in the CPCz is also documented by the fact that four secretaries of the CC CPCz, nine leading secretaries of regional committees and 59 leading secretaries of district committees of the Party were expelled from among its ranks because of active rightist opportunist and anti-socialist activities. More than one third of members of the Central Committee, regional committees and district committees were either forced to resign or expelled from the Party.

The Central Committee of the CPCz, as the

supreme Party body between congresses, as well as its executive bodies ceased to fulfil the role of headquarters directing the development of socialist society and the defence of its revolutionary achievements. A. Dubček and his followers, who monopolized decision-making in the Party leadership, paralysed the activities of the Presidium and the entire CC CPCz. They prevented the adoption of effective measures at a time when this was still possible and by their attitude cleared one position after the other to hostile and reactionary forces. This heightened and intensified the audacity and aggressiveness of the counter-revolution, while the possibility of it being suppressed by internal political and power means gradually weakened to the point when it practically disappeared.

2. The disintegration of socialist power also attained a considerable degree. The conduct of A. Dubček at the head of the Party and of O. Černík as Prime Minister greatly contributed to the fact that the activities of the power organs of the socialist State, the Security body, the judiciary and the army were gradually disrupted, of which full advantage was

taken by internal and foreign enemies of our system.

The activities of the Government and its course were, in addition to O. Černík, determined by other rightist officials who were weakening the State leadership of socialist society, deforming the aims of the economic reform and opening up scope in all possible ways for revisionist and anti-socialist conceptions in all fundamental spheres of State policy. They included primarily O. Šik who gradually got from his revisionist conceptions in the economic sphere and from "theoretical" proposals for changing the political system to direct betrayal of socialism and eventually ended up as a common-place lackey of anti-communist centres in the West.

O. Černík as Prime Minister ignored many critical voices and recommendations of comrades from the Government and of elected functionaries of national committees. He essentially paralysed the initiative aimed at the elimination of negative phenomena. He did not give members of the Government, and especially of its Presidium, objective information about the real situation in the country, nor about the serious problems which were arising in our relations

with the USSR and other allies, although these questions were constantly on the agenda of the Presidium of the CC CPCz. In this way, those Deputy-Premiers and Ministers who were concerned about the contemporary situation and demanded resolute measures against the growing danger were getting into isolation.

The gradual paralysation of the actual mission and the activities of the power organs was carried out by the right wing after thorough premeditation, overtly as well as in a disguised form. It wanted to achieve a situation in which these bodies would, in case of need, be unable to take a resolute stand against the counter-revolution and to defend the power of the working class but, on the contrary, that they could be even abused, at the right moment, by the rightist circles striving for a reversal of political conditions. At the same time, the right wing put forward the question of recompensing all revolutionary acts of class justice from the period after February 1948, and in this connection insolently abused the fact that the Party had admitted and criticized cases of violation of socialist legality in the fifties.

Gradually, a situation was created that honest workers of power organs of the State were being politically disarmed and isolated, whereas the provocativeness and audacity of counter-revolutionaries and of downright criminal elements did not meet with resistance and sanctions on the part of State power. Honest members of the Security body were disoriented by the very fact that the Minister of Interior, J. Pavel, did not make any secret of his intention to liquidate the State Security body. He publicly proclaimed this and also implemented it in practice. Neither did he conceal that he identified himself with the programme of the revisionist and anti-socialist forces.

The leadership of the Party and of the State not only failed to call the Minister of Interior, J. Pavel, to account on Party and service lines, but, by its complete inactivity, aided the boundless liberalization in security and judicial bodies which in its consequences inevitably led to the loss of political and legal certainty of citizens of the Czechoslovak Socialist State.

Overall developments in the Party and in the en-

tire society had logically also a negative impact on the activities and the political and moral state of the Czechoslovak Army. The new leadership of the Army started to be formed in April 1968, in an atmosphere of uncertainty and growing rightist pressures, when the political disintegration in the Army was accompanied by a general loosening of discipline and violation of the principles of indivisible power of commanders, to an extent unthinkable in a socialist country.

One of the political and ideological centres of the right wing was the Military Political Academy from which, in the summer of 1968, there even originated an official memorandum demanding a reassessment of the principles of the Party's and the State's military policy which had been approved by the 13th Congress of the CPCz, and an adjustment of the Czechoslovak military doctrine on the basis of a revision of our relationship with the Warsaw Treaty.

A considerable share in the growth of negative phenomena in the Army was held by General V. Prchlík who after January 1968 shifted from the

function of chief of the Main Political Administration to the post of head of department of the CC CPCz for the Direction of Party Work in the Army, the Security body, courts and the prosecution. V. Prchlik became an active executant of the opportunist course in relation to the Army, the Security body, the courts and the prosecution.

The state existing at that time in the Army and in the Security body required resolute measures in order to strengthen Party influence. However, what happened was the very opposite. The security and defence department of the CC CPCz was, instead of a cadre solution, at A. Dubček's proposal abolished. The supreme Party body thus lost an important instrument for directing communists in the Army and in the Security body.

These and many other facts prove that the political and combat preparedness of the Czechoslovak Army was considerably impaired. The great extent to which our Army was hit by rightist opportunism is confirmed by the fact that a considerable number of members of Army unit organizations was expelled from the Party because of anti-socialist activities and

gross violation of military regulations, and many of them had to leave the Army.

In the supreme legislative body – the National Assembly – all decisive positions were also seized by a group of rightist deputies headed by the National Assembly's Chairman Josef Smrkovský. Josef Smrkovský was surrounded by an artificially created cult of a "people's tribune" who was to have a decisive say in everything. J. Smrkovský and his helpers in Parliament as well as in the mass media suppressed, by studied demagogy, every voice of alarm raised by those deputies who respected the real interests of the Party and the people and were demanding a resolute course against the hostile forces. J. Smrkovský was on the one hand pushing through the adoption of certain incorrect legislative amendments playing into the hands of the right wing, while on the other hand he was in every possible way, together with F. Kriegel, delaying the adoption of legislative measures directed against reaction and counter-revolution.

The machinations of the rightist forces in the sphere of State power are also proved by the election

of deputies to the Czech National Council in July 1968. The election of deputies was even accompanied by electoral frauds. The Czech National Council, headed by Č. Císař, was being turned by the right wing into another important instrument for the achievement of a political reversal in the country.

The decisive links of executive and legislative power in Czechoslovakia thus gradually ceased to fulfil their class mission in the political system of the socialist State. The rightist opportunist and anti-socialist forces gained a key position in them and made use of their positions for nipping in the bud every effort intended to halt and avert the catastrophic development.

The power organs of the State Security body, the judiciary and the Army were paralysed, they were not directed by leading bodies of the Party and State, so that they were unable to oppose the intense onslaught of the counter-revolutionary underground and the subversive activities of external enemies. The fighting capacity and the moral and political state of the Czechoslovak People's Army markedly declined, so that there legitimately arose the question

whether our Army was able, without clear instructions of the leadership of the Party and the Government, to ensure the protection of our western border which is at the same time the border of the whole world socialist system.

3. In the political system of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, an important place in the construction and defence of socialism is held by the National Front as the political alliance of working people of towns and villages, social organizations and special-interest associations which recognize the leading role of the CPCz. The rightist opportunist forces concentrated after January 1968 on transforming the National Front into such a political grouping which would negate the leading role of the CPCz in our society. The main instigator of these endeavours was the Chairman of the Central Committee of the National Front and member of the Presidium of the CC CPCz, Fr. Kriegel, who became one of the leading figures of the nationalist, anti-Soviet and downright counter-revolutionary current.

A particularly vehement struggle was waged for the trade unions which the right wing wanted to

deprive of their class content and mission. Efforts to disrupt the unity of the trade union movement were the expression of the concentrated attack on the part of the right wing against the class unity of the working people; this attack was at the same time intended to undermine and liquidate the leading position of the working class in socialist society. The working class as a whole did not allow itself to be pushed by the counter-revolution to anti-Soviet acts.

Principled trade union officials, especially honest communists, were scandalized and removed from functions without being given protection by Party bodies. Instead of them, the right wing pushed into functions advocates of the so-called process of revival and not infrequently even *déclassé* elements; the main criterion in their selection was their negative attitude to the leading role of the Party, to the Marxist-Leninist conception of socialist construction and to the alliance with the Soviet Union.

Under the slogan of a "new trade union policy" a "Draft Programme of Activities of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement" was elaborated and widely publicized, which had a downright opportu-

nist and revisionist character. It negated the Leninist principles of the organizing and educational activities of trade unions under socialism and their share of responsibility for the development of the socialist economy. In the elections of trade union bodies, the thesis on "trade unions without communists" was successful in a considerable number of enterprises. There were even cases when various so-called organizations of working people were set up outside the framework of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, such as e.g. the federation of Locomotive Crews, which were controlled by downright counter-revolutionary elements.

A similar process as in the trade unions was also taking place, with partial specifications, in other social organizations associated in the National Front. Great damage was perpetrated by the right wing especially in relation to our youth. Under the guise of criticism of shortcomings, the Czechoslovak Union of Youth was broken up as a unified organization influencing the political and ideological education of young people in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism. As a result of the irresolute course taken by the Presidium

of the CC CPCz, youth organizations were delivered to the tender mercies of rightist and counter-revolutionary forces.

At that time, political life was also entered by new organizations with an openly anti-socialist programme, such as K 231 and KAN, which were directly linked to western anti-communist centres. This was only further evidence that the destructive process in our political system had already acquired definite counter-revolutionary features. These two reactionary organizations quite openly proclaimed that their immediate aim was a revenge for February 1948 and they did not even hide the fact that they wanted to establish a bourgeois democratic system and settle ruthlessly accounts with communists and all honest builders of socialism. The leadership of the Party and of the Government did not take action even against such clearly anti-socialist and counter-revolutionary groupings.

In the Czechoslovak Socialist Party and in the Czechoslovak People's Party, ever greater influence was being gained by forces which wanted to return to them the old anti-communist role these two par-

ties had been playing before February 1948. These aims were served by the mass recruitment of new members and the adoption of new programmes. Broad activities were also developed by the Work of Council Revival, which was gaining a considerably large mass basis, especially in Slovakia, in the service of militant political clericalism.

A programme of an open revision of February 1948 and of splitting up again the political unity of the working class was also put forward by the Social Democratic Party which voiced its support of the anti-communist line of the Socialist International.

Many facts prove that, in 1968, a broad anti-communist coalition was created in this country and that there was emerging a new structure of the political system which was actually restoring the situation from before February 1948 and in which there even appeared distinct features of the pre-Munich bourgeois Republic. While the CPCz was being disrupted by rightist opportunists and while its activities were paralysed and its capacity to act was crippled, the petty bourgeois counter-revolution was

creating for itself ever greater reserves which it detailed to the political struggle as required. The rightist part of the leadership of the CPCz presented this anti-socialist movement as a positive political committedness of our citizens. At the same time, the right wing described all those who came out against these dangerous phenomena as sectarian and conservative opponents of "socialist revival". In reality, the rightist opportunist officials opened up scope for downright reactionary and counter-revolutionary elements which were elbowing their way to the forefront and did not conceal their intention to remove A. Dubček, O. Černík and others from power as soon as they would not any more need their protection and patronage.

4. In pushing through their aims, the right wing and anti-socialist forces placed also extraordinary emphasis on eliminating the leading role of the Party in the economy, on disrupting the principles of central planned management of the national economy and on pushing through a revisionist conception of the economic reform. The Czechoslovak economy was to be gradually separated from the socialist com-

munity and tied, as much as possible, to the economy of the capitalist West.

The rightist opportunist practice and interpretation of the economic reform pursued the abolishment of all central economic bodies of management, the complete negation of the role of the plan, separation of economic management from political decision-making and the gradual liquidation of all-people ownership. The essential aim was to completely eliminate the socialist State, the Party and the trade unions from the shaping and implementation of the economic policy and to unleash uncontrolled market conditions with all their negative consequences for the social and material position of the working people. Under the pretext that it is necessary to comply with the wishes of consumers, the right wing advocated private enterprise in order that the petty bourgeois element might also have its own economic basis for disrupting socialism. The counter-revolutionary designs in the sphere of the national economy are today already openly admitted by O. Šik himself and his friends in the West.

In theory as well as in practice, the transformation

of the socialist economy was thus gradually prepared and stagewise implemented into a system which would deprive the working class and all working people not only of all revolutionary achievements but also of basic political and economic certainty. The right wing anticipated that the gradual deterioration of the economic situation would evoke spontaneous discontent among the Czechoslovak working people, and that it would then take advantage of this discontent in the fight against socialist power.

5. Serious problems and crisis phenomena in the ideological sphere, which had originated and developed in our society over a considerable time, resulted after January 1968 in the distortion, negation and eventually even in direct rejection of the basic principles of the Marxist-Leninist world outlook in philosophy, sociology, history, in the economy, in the sphere of the State, law and Party structure, as well as in culture and arts; in all these fields there was direct capitulation to bourgeois ideology. The ideological struggle developed into a direct struggle for power in which the right wing made full use of the mass media.

Through the fault of the capitulationist attitude of the rightist part of the Dubček leadership, the rightist forces secured full control of the radio, television, news reels and the majority of the press, and transformed them into the main pressure and power instrument for pushing through their aims. The overall orientation of the content of the mass media essentially merged with the ideological subversive activity of the imperialist West.

The aggressive groups of the so-called progressives were silencing and terrorizing honest editors and journalists who wanted to evaluate the situation in our country truthfully and objectively. They intimidated by all possible means everyone who was defending the principles of Marxism-Leninism, proletarian internationalism, the alliance with the USSR and our membership in the world socialist community, who expressed disagreement with or resisted the rising wave of anti-socialist and anti-Soviet hysteria, and were demanding his elimination from the national community.

The Czechoslovak events confirm that in the ideological sphere there can be no question of re-

treating before bourgeois ideology with which there can be no compromise. They confirm that the Party must not succumb to practicicism, weaken ideological work, reduce it to mere propaganda of policy, to abstract explanation of Marxist-Leninist teachings. Ideological work of the Party has always been, continues to be and must remain an inseparable part of the political fight of the Party and the working class. Every neglect, every weakening of mass-political and ideological work of the Party, every disruption of its theoretical, class and internationalist foundations are exploited by the ideological opponent. This logically leads at first to attempts to "improve" or "perfect" socialism, to the replacement of internationalism by nationalism, develops into cultivation of the ideal of petty-bourgeois consumer socialism, to the creation of false myths about socialist reality, until it eventually results in rejection and negation of socialism in general. The Communist Party and the socialist State must control all instruments for putting through their political, class and ideological aims. The mass media, the press, radio, television and cinema, are an immensely important instrument

of power and mass political education which must never get out of the direction and control of the Marxist-Leninist party and the socialist State, if the cause of socialism is not to be seriously endangered.

6. Throughout the whole time of the existence of the Czechoslovak Republic, the working class and working people, headed by the CPCz, were waging a struggle for the basic foreign political orientation of the State, which would safeguard its independence, sovereignty and free development. The Czechoslovak-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Post-War Co-operation of December 12, 1943, was the expression of the will of the people who found out for themselves, on the basis of the tragic experience from the years 1938 and 1939 and in the course of the national liberation struggle, that the vital interests of our nations, the internal and international security of the Czechoslovak State are inseparable from the indestructible internationalist fraternity with the Soviet Union. This unswerving will of the people was anchored in the Košice Government Programme and was definitively reaffirmed by the victorious February of 1948. The Constitution of

the ČSSR, all resolutions adopted at congresses of the CPCz, the Party Rules and programme statements of Czechoslovak governments after February 1948, state clearly and unequivocally that our friendship and alliance with the Soviet Union, with which we are linked by common class interests, is the chief safeguard of the very existence of the Czech and Slovak nations and the supreme guarantee of our successful socialist road.

However, after January 1968 the right wing started to throw this basic truth increasingly into doubt, until it finally openly adopted anti-Soviet positions and deliberately undermined our internationalist commitments ensuing from the membership of the ČSSR in the Warsaw Treaty. Under the slogan of a so-called own face of Czechoslovak foreign policy, a course aiming at a rupture with our socialist allies and fraternal parties was being pushed through step by step. Such a detrimental line was implemented at a time when our country had become the object of the main interest of imperialism which wanted to exploit our inner-political development for dealing a blow to the cause of socialism not only in our

country but, through Czechoslovakia, also to the vital interests of the entire socialist community. The anti-Soviet orientation of the rightist forces in the CPCz became also part of the international revisionist current for which the so-called Czechoslovak experiment was an invigorating injection and a new argument in support of the demand for a revision of the main principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism in the communist movement.

The foreign political conception of the right wing, which was the result of the counter-revolutionary development in the ČSSR, led in its consequences not only to a threat to the internal stability and security of the State and to its sovereignty and peaceful conditions for calm work of the people, but also to the exposure of the Western border of the camp of socialism, of which Czechoslovakia was to be a firm outpost at the dividing line between the socialist and the capitalist system in Europe. The defence and preservation of socialism in our country did not, therefore, concern only the immediate interests of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and our

working people, but they necessarily became the common concern of the socialist States, the fraternal parties of these countries and the entire communist movement.

This general characteristic of the crisis development within the Party and society in the ČSSR confirms that the disruptive process unleashed by the rightist and anti-socialist forces affected all spheres of public and political life – the economy, ideology and foreign policy. In August 1968, an acute counter-revolutionary situation emerged in Czechoslovakia and our country got on the verge of civil war. In all sharpness, there arose the question of “who will come out on top”. Either the counter-revolution, relying on the support of international reaction, will complete its pernicious work, or else the socialist forces will succeed in repelling the counter-revolution and in defending the cause of socialism.

Communists as well as non-communists, who were aware of the mortal danger threatening our socialist system, were demanding that the leadership of the Party and the State resolutely resist the coun-

ter-revolutionary forces and stand up in defence of the achievements of socialism. These urgent appeals were contained in many resolutions and letters to the CC CPCz, but they remained without answer. At the time when the counter-revolutionary forces in Prague and at other places were going over into open attack in an effort to seize power, the rightist representatives in the leadership of the Party assured the public that “everything is in order” and that “the process of revival and democratization is successfully developing”.

Thousands of communists, individual citizens and entire collectives of working people, representatives of all strata of the population and various organizations, including members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia, as well as members of the Government of the ČSSR and deputies of the National Assembly and of the Slovak National Council, being aware of their class, national and international responsibility for the fate of socialism in Czechoslovakia, were persistently seeking a way out of the difficult, critical

situation. In view of the fact that the rightist part of the Party leadership did not want to adopt any measures which would have led to thwarting the counter-revolutionary coup and to averting civil war, they began to turn to the leadership of the fraternal parties and to the governments of our allies with the request that at this historically serious moment they should grant internationalist assistance to the Czechoslovak people in the defense of socialism. They did so in the deep conviction that their class brethren would not leave Czechoslovakia at the mercy of counter-revolution which threatened with bloodshed, and that they would prevent our country from being torn out of the socialist community.

Objective assessment and clarification of the causes and interrelations of the deep crisis in which the CPCz and our entire society found themselves in 1968 give irrefutable proof that the internal forces, paralysed by the policy of the rightist representatives in the Party leadership, were unable to mobilize themselves and to halt the frontal onslaught of the counter-revolution. In this situation, it was necessary to decide whether to wait up to the time when the

counter-revolution provokes a fratricidal fight in which thousands of people will die and to grant internationalist assistance only afterwards, or whether to come in time and prevent a bloody tragedy even at the cost of initial lack of understanding at home and abroad. The entry of the allied troops into Czechoslovakia on August 21, 1968 prevented such a bloodshed and was therefore the requisite and only correct solution.

Thorough examination of facts on the conditions in our Party and in the whole country before August 1968, as well as in the subsequent period, confirms that any other solution which would not comprise immediate external assistance by the USSR and our other allies, could not, under conditions when the activities of the Party were paralysed and the Czechoslovak State system was getting on the verge of disintegration, have any chance of success since it would not have led to saving socialism in the ČSSR.

The entry of the allied troops of the five socialist countries into Czechoslovakia was an act of internationalist solidarity which corresponded both to the common interests of Czechoslovak working people

and of the international working class, the socialist community and the class interests of the world communist movement. This internationalist action saved the lives of thousands of people, ensured internal and external conditions for their peaceful and calm work, strengthened the western border of the socialist camp and thwarted the hopes of imperialist circles for a revision of the results of the Second World War.

The CC CPCz rejects the abstract concept of the sovereignty of a socialist State, which is being disseminated by bourgeois propaganda in the interest of deceiving the masses, and stands on positions which correspond also in the question of sovereignty to the class and internationalist character of the socialist State. It therefore regards the entry of the allied troops into the ČSSR as fraternal internationalist assistance to the Czechoslovak people.

The internationalist action of August to save socialism in the ČSSR created a firm hinterland for Czechoslovak communists who, thanks to this assistance, could fully develop their own political struggle against the counter-revolutionary, anti-socialist and rightist opportunist forces and could by political

means overcome the counter-revolutionary threat to the cause of socialism in the ČSSR.

Truthful knowledge of the whole background of the real situation in 1968 and of all motives for the entry of the allied troops into the ČSSR shows in the true light all the lies, slanders and deliberate distortions of facts fabricated and disseminated by our internal reaction, rightist opportunists and foreign bourgeois propaganda about the events of August. Deep and correct understanding of the real significance of these events is at the same time the decisive prerequisite for the creation of a sound political atmosphere in our country, for strengthening the ideological and action unity of the CPCz on a Marxist-Leninist and internationalist basis.

After the entry of the allied troops, A. Dubček, O. Černík, J. Smrkovský, F. Kriegel, J. Špaček, Z. Mlynář, Š. Sádovský, Č. Císař, V. Slavík deepened their betrayal of the interests of the Party, the Czechoslovak people and the international communist movement, and took another hazardous step. In the night from August 20 to 21, 1968, they pushed through, in spite of principled opposition and dis-

agreement of the Marxist-Leninist part in the Party leadership, a non-class, anti-internationalist declaration of the Presidium of the CC CPCz, whose publication had catastrophic consequences.

After this perfidious act, A. Dubček dissolved the session of the Presidium of the CC CPCz. With his knowledge and behind the back of the CC CPCz, the Presidium and part of the City Committee of the CPCz in Prague, which represented a well-known bulwark of the right wing, convened the illegal extraordinary Congress of the CPCz at which the rightist opportunists wanted to seize full control of the Party leadership and, in particular, to proclaim an all-round struggle against the Soviet Union and to mobilize against it not only all domestic but also foreign anti-Soviet and anti-communist forces.

After August 21, 1968, the anti-socialist forces turned the declaration of the Presidium of the CC CPCz, which was in its essence an unprecedented anti-Party act, into their shield. The right wing blackmailed thousands of members and functionaries of the Party and forced them to be guided by this declaration. It recalled that communists must fulfil with

discipline the resolution of the Presidium of the Central Committee of their Party. With its assistance, it opened up fully the flood-gate of anti-Soviet hysteria and put into motion an avalanche of chauvinism which was outwardly expressed by pseudo-patriotic appeals and slogans. There ensued incredible disorientation because the counter-revolution deliberately provoked, with the assistance of the mass media, a wild panic. It turned all basic notions and values upside down. What was legal was declared to be illegal, while all illegal activities of the counter-revolution were given the semblance of legality.

On the basis of the declaration of the Presidium of the CC CPCz, the right wing forced the adoption of similar declarations in the Government, the National Assembly and other State and social organizations. The rightist opportunists and counter-revolutionary forces exacted agreement with their nationalist and anti-Soviet content by moral terror and even by threats of physical violence.

The counter-revolutionary role of the mass media climaxed after August 21, 1968 in a tornado of chauvinistic demagoguery which was to prevent Czechoslo-

vak citizens from discerning the correct dividing line of the class struggle. This demagoguery was at the same time intended to create in our country and in the State the impression that this was a "patriotic movement of the whole nation". To this atmosphere succumbed even many honest communists and decent citizens of our Republic who, through the fault of the general disinformation and the deeply erroneous declaration of the Presidium of the CC CPCz, were unable to quickly discern the real truth. Many of them committed acts which were at variance with their real conviction. Gradually, they found out for themselves and are finding out that the internationalist assistance of the allies was correct, they sincerely regret their attitudes and actions of that period and express by honest work their devotion to the cause of socialism.

In the complicated situation of that time, statesmanlike prudence and foresight was displayed by Comrade L. Svoboda. Already in the night from August 20 to 21, 1968, and in subsequent days, the President of the Republic and the Minister of Defence issued orders in which they enjoined the Czechoslo-

vak People's Army to keep calm and not to provoke clashes with the troops of the allies. These orders were essentially fulfilled, which prevented unforeseeable consequences.

After August 21, 1968, the counter-revolutionary elements were creating chaos, disruption, constant tension and disturbances in Czechoslovakia. The rightist opportunists, too, engaged in intensive activity in order to prevent, at all costs, normalization in the Party and in relations to the fraternal parties. People like V. Šilhan, J. Litera, J. Šabata, L. Lis, Z. Hejzlar, J. Pelikán, B. Rattinger, M. Vaculík, P. Machonin, K. Kaplan, M. Hájek, R. Horák, D. Havlíček, J. Ruml and others who had earlier, together with the exponents of the right wing in the leadership of the Party and the State, carried out dangerous activities and helped to create the counter-revolutionary situation and disrupted the Party, State organs and social organizations, were now making every possible effort in order to constantly maintain the extreme tension in the country. The absolute majority of them belong to the main organizers of the illegal Vysočany Congress held on August 22,

1968. Most delegates to this Congress, among whom participants were missing from Slovakia, created the background for the pre-arranged proclamation of a platform which was at complete variance with the mission, the programme and the whole revolutionary and internationalist history of our Party. The illegal Vysočany Congress set itself the aim:

- to adopt a comprehensive anti-Soviet platform which contained various ultimative demands in relation to the CPSU and the Soviet Union. In this, the rightists assumed the pose of some sort of victors, although, in reality, they already were mere bakrupts
- to openly proclaim the rupture with the CPSU and other fraternal parties. The organizers of the illegal Congress even arrogantly assumed the right to excommunicate these parties from the international communist movement;
- to negate all revolutionary traditions of the Party and its Marxist-Leninist programme principles, and to transform it into some sort of a nationalist, chauvinist and anti-Soviet grouping under the name of the CPCz.

The attempt of the right wing to complete the

coup in the CPCz was also reflected in the staged elections of the so-called Vysočany Central Committee, which included predominantly people standing on anti-Party positions. The right wing also seized the central press organ of the Party, *Rudé právo*, whose individual numbers, especially from August 21 to September 3, by their entire provocative nationalist and anti-Soviet content betrayed the internationalist traditions of *Rudé právo* and did not have anything in common either with the Party or with Marxism-Leninism.

The Vysočany rightist centre disinformed and deceived by all possible means fraternal parties, especially in the West, in an effort to secure also within the framework of the international communist movement support for its revisionist and anti-Soviet course. At the same time, it actively helped to turn the so-called Czechoslovak question into the cardinal point of a spiteful campaign unleashed by imperialist circles. O. Šik, who on August 21, 1968, together with a group of Ministers – exponents of the right wing – was staying in Belgrade, illegally commissioned J. Hájek to go to the United Nations. J. Hájek

really participated in the discussion of the so-called Czechoslovak question in the Security Council upon whose agenda it was forced by the western powers. At this forum, he delivered a very crafty anti-Soviet speech, although he was conveyed strict instructions from the President of the Republic, the Government and the CC CPCz that he should not go to New York and that he should not take the floor in the Security Council.

On August 23, 1968, the President of the Republic, Comrade L. Svoboda, and a Czechoslovak delegation consisting of comrades G. Husák, V. Biřak, A. Indra, J. Piller, M. Dzúr and B. Kučera left for Moscow in spite of opposition on the part of the rightist representatives. In Moscow it was joined by A. Dubček, O. Černík, J. Smrkovský, J. Špaček and B. Šimon and, on August 25, by further members of the Party leadership, O. Švestka, E. Rigo, F. Barbírek, M. Jakeš, J. Lenárt and Z. Mlynář.

The results of the four-day talks between the Czechoslovak and Soviet leading representatives were expressed in a joint protocol signed by all par-

ticipants present. The Czechoslovak representatives expressed in this document their determination to achieve a normalization of conditions in our country on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, to restore the leading role of the Party and the authority of the State power of the working class, to eliminate counter-revolutionary organizations from political life and to strengthen the international ties of the ČSSR with the Soviet Union and other socialist allies. This document was a starting-point for constructive work. An active part in the general positive results of the Moscow talks was played on the Czechoslovak side by comrades L. Svoboda, G. Husák, V. Biřak and other comrades holding clear internationalist class positions.

At this time, a rapid course of events set in also in Slovakia where – although there were certain differences – it contained similar features as in the Czech lands. On August 21, 22 and 23, the sound part of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia endeavoured, with the participation of Comrade Husák, to maintain necessary prudence and responsibility. After the

arrival of commissioners of the so-called Vysočany Central Committee (F. Vodsloň, L. Hrdinová, and Š. Sádovský), the rightist opportunist representatives of the Communist Party of Slovakia V. Pavlenda, J. Zrak, A. Ťažký, S. Faltan, R. Harenčár, convened through the rightist part of the City Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia in Bratislava an extraordinary Congress of the Communist Party of Slovakia for August 26, 1968. This Congress initially proceeded in an extremely nationalist and anti-Soviet atmosphere. It espoused the results of the illegal Vysočany Congress and, following its example, adopted a provocative appeal addressed to the communist and workers parties of the five socialist countries.

After a break in its proceedings, the extraordinary Congress of the Communist Party of Slovakia reconvened on August 28. It was attended, after his return from Moscow, by Comrade G. Husák whose speech brought about a fundamental change in its course. The extraordinary Congress of the Communist Party of Slovakia adopted a resolution by which it rejected the legality of the so-called Vysočany Congress, annulled the content of the conclusions

of the first part of the Congress of the Communist Party of Slovakia, unanimously approved the Moscow Protocol and elected G. Husák First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia. The influence and pressure of the rightist opportunist forces was, of course, still considerable, which was reflected in particular in the elections to the new Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia to which a number of Marxist-Leninist cadres, whom the right wing exposed to constant attacks, were not elected.

After the return of the Presidium of the CC CPCz from Moscow, talks full of controversies were held in Prague in connection with the preparation of the plenary session of the CC CPCz, which was to discuss and draw conclusions from the Moscow Protocol. A. Dubček, O. Černík, J. Smrkovský and other rightist representatives approached the fulfilment of the Moscow Protocol irresponsibly and perfidiously. They essentially supported the results of the illegal Vysočany Congress, although in the talks in Moscow they declared that they did not recognize its validity. At the same time, they co-

ordinated their course with the organizers of this Congress from among which many were co-opted to the CC CPCz where they significantly strengthened the influence of the right wing. The right wing also benefited by a change in the composition of the Presidium of the CC CPCz which actually resulted in the recalling of Fr. Kriegel but, in consequence of behind-the-scene machinations, comrades O. Švestka, D. Kolder, E. Rigo and A. Kapek were also deprived of their functions. It was a great mistake of the CC CPCz that it approved, at this session, the co-optation of many rightist opportunist exponents to its ranks, as well as a numerous extension of the Central Committee Presidium into which there also got a number of rightists.

In his speech at the August plenum of the CC CPCz, A. Dubček justified by every possible means his opportunist course, obscured the content of the Moscow Protocol and evaded the commitments ensuing from it for our Party and State bodies. He adopted a conciliatory attitude to the illegal Vysočany Congress.

The CC CPCz declared this Congress at its

session of September 25 to 26, 1969, to be invalid, characterized it as the result of inadmissible factional activities on the part of some members of the CC CPCz, the rightist majority of the City Committee of the CPCz in Prague and other rightist opportunist forces. By its resolution, it confirmed the invalidity of the factional assembly and annulled the non-class, anti-internationalist and anti-Party declaration of the Presidium of the CC CPCz of August 21, 1968.

The fact that, at its session on August 31, 1968, the CC CPCz approved the Moscow Protocol, was of far-reaching importance. A positive action of the August plenum of the CC CPCz was the fact that it co-opted Comrade G. Husák and Comrade L. Svoboda to the Central Committee and that it elected them to the Presidium of the CC CPCz. The principled stand taken by both comrades at the plenum decisively contributed to the fact that the Central Committee approved the Moscow Protocol and supported the programme for the normalization of life in this country.

In order to achieve normalization, it was primarily necessary to rally all sound forces in the Party as

well as outside the Party, for a decisive blow against the reactionary forces, to expose the rightist opportunists and their real designs, to defeat the right wing in open political struggle, to wrench from its hands the decisive positions and instruments of power, especially the mass media, and to extricate the broad strata of working people from its influence. The conditions under which this struggle was taking place were exceptionally difficult and complicated.

Many people had succumbed to ideological confusion and were unable to free themselves from the emotions which had been incited and were being further revided, especially by the mass media. The slogan about "national unity" became a magic formula which served for terrorizing morally and politically honest communists and internationalist-minded working people. By its pressure and nationalist incitement, whose intensity became unbearable, the right wing inflicted unimaginable damage. It is thus responsible for the misfortune of many families whose members allowed themselves to be dragged into the whirl of nationalist and anti-Soviet spite, and some have even left the country.

In the first weeks after August 21, the rightist and anti-socialist forces were still very insolent and audacious. They trusted that in A. Dubček, O. Černík and other rightists in the leadership of the Party and of the State as well as in other links of the political system, who were pursuing a policy of two faces, they were having a support, and that by means of the media influencing public opinion they could essentially work in the spirit of the days from before August without meeting with appropriate organized resistance.

However, the counter-revolutionary elements were not given much time to rejoice over certain successes they had been initially attaining after August 1968. A great spoke in their wheel was put by the approval of the treaty on the temporary stay of the Soviet troops in the ČSSR, which was adopted by the National Assembly on October 18, 1968. The adoption of this treaty was an important political and psychological factor which gave all real communists and honest followers of socialism certainty and an impulse for the further struggle for cleansing and strengthening all socialist values.

This was also the case with the further effective help by the Soviet Union, which had an all-round character and was of vital importance for our country. The extraordinary deliveries of grain, oil, valuable non-ferrous metals and other raw materials ensured the functioning of our national economy and thwarted all sort of speculations of rightist and anti-socialist forces linked with the political and other consequences of the economic disruption and chaos which they were deliberately creating. Of invaluable importance was the ideological assistance of the CPSU to the sound core of our Party whom truthful information and the Leninist standpoints of Soviet communists enabled to orientate themselves correctly in the complicated situation and to steel their principled and internationalist attitudes.

The Marxist-Leninist Left, which was newly forming itself, and its representatives in the Presidium and in the Secretariat of the CC CPCz, in the plenum of the CC CPCz and in the Party apparatus set themselves the aim to cleanse the Party and our entire social life from the deposit of revisionism, opportunism and nationalism, to deprive the anti-

socialist and counter-revolutionary forces of their influence, to fully restore and further develop the strength of our socialist system. Those sound forces which were constantly the target of attacks on the part of the right wing and the counter-revolutionary forces, put up against the petty-bourgeois slogan "unity of the nation" the only correct class conception of a revolutionary alliance of working people headed by the working class. In this they had to overcome, by patient work, mistrust and lack of understanding and to gradually win over to their side those honest comrades and citizens who had temporarily wavered in the days of August and were now seeking the truth.

However, the implementation of this conception was very difficult because the rightist opportunist forces were even after August 21 maintaining nearly all their positions and even strengthened them in a certain respect. In view of this, the sound core of the Party was forced to use also extraordinary forms of political struggle, the more so since the press, radio and television still remained in the hands of the right wing. An important role in the post-August

period was played by the magazine *Zprávy* which was not only a significant factor of ideological work, but also became an important instrument for the organizational unification of all sound forces. At a time when the official Party press did not fulfil its mission and reflected Dubček's political line of two faces, the magazine *Zprávy* was raising the revolutionary and class self-confidence of real communists whom it helped create a purifying Marxist-Leninist current within the Party.

The internationalist Left began to switch over to an ever-growing extent from personal agitation to open political addresses and actions. In this connection, it is necessary to highly appreciate the courage and immeasurable initiative especially of many pre-war Party members who did not spare their energy in the fight for returning to the CPCz its revolutionary honour.

An important measuring of forces between the right wing and the Left took place in connection with the 51st anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. After many months, in which the rightist and anti-socialist elements were in every

possible way stifling any public manifestation of friendship with the Soviet Union, public demonstrations were again held in honour of the Great October. On the other hand, however, it was also confirmed that the counter-revolution has not yet by far capitulated. It proved this by various acts of vandalism, destruction of monuments, by burning Soviet flags, and so on.

The first marked success of the Marxist-Leninist Left, upon which it could base its further initiative and activity, was the plenary session of the CC CPCz in November 1968. Its results to a considerable extent narrowed down the scope for activities of rightist elements.

The fact that it was possible to put through a resolution which exposed the role of the anti-socialist forces before August and which openly characterized rightist opportunism as the main danger within the Party, was of great importance for the further development within the CPCz and the entire society. The discussion of the resolution by bodies and organizations of the CPCz speeded up the political differentiation and enabled the Left to defend and

develop the Marxist-Leninist course of the Party at the Party forum.

A positive contribution were also further decisions of the November plenum. The creation of the Executive Committee of the Presidium of the CC CPCz restricted the influence of the right wing in the Party leadership and made also its further manoeuvring more difficult. The establishment of the Bureau of the CC CPCz for the Direction of Party Work in the Czech Lands thwarted the intentions of the rightist opportunists to convene a so-called Congress of Czech communists and to split the CPCz according to the criterion of nationality. At this period, considerable efforts were made by its chairman, Comrade L. Štrougal, in the Bureau of the CC CPCz and by many comrades in regions, districts and basic organizations in order that the right wing might gradually be squeezed out from the direction of lower Party bodies and that Party work in the Czech lands might be restored on communist principles. A positive role in the fight against rightist opportunist forces was in general played by the control and auditing commissions of

the Party. The monopoly of the right wing in the sphere of the mass media was broken through by the creation of the magazine *Tribuna* as the organ of the Bureau of the CC CPCz, which in this difficult period linked up with the revolutionary and internationalist traditions of the Czechoslovak communist press.

In paralysing the influence and the activities of the rightist representatives in the Party leadership, a highly active role was played by Comrade G. Husák whom the November 1968 plenum of the CC CPCz confirmed in the function of First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia and elected member of the Executive Committee of the Presidium of the CC CPCz. G. Husák inscribed himself in the minds of the sound core of the Party and of all honest citizens of our socialist State by his firm and courageous stand in relation to the counter-revolution and by his consistently internationalist attitude in the solution of all questions which were connected with the restoration of comradesly co-operation and ideological unity with the CPSU and other fraternal parties. In this connection,

Comrade Husák's positive role asserted itself especially in the talks of the delegation of the CC CPCz with leading representatives of the CPSU in Moscow (October 1968) and Kiev (December 1968), where together with the President of the Republic, Comrade L. Svoboda, they significantly contributed to the restoration and consolidation of mutual trust.

After the November plenum, the right wing began to realize that it would increasingly lose foothold and that the whole tissue of its conspirative machinations and intrigues would be gradually exposed, which would lead to the liquidation of its positions and its influence in our public life. It therefore used all levers in order to delay as much as possible its downfall and condemnation by the Czechoslovak people. Its platform was henceforth a policy of two faces. Outwardly it hypocritically recognized that it was necessary to strengthen and develop our socialist system and the ties of alliance of the ČSSR with our allies, but in reality it persisted in its earlier positions. It protected and strengthened by all possible means its set of people in the mass media and was pushing through with great efforts its cadres

to the newly created governments of the Czech Socialist Republic and the Slovak Socialist Republic, to the Czech National Council and the House of Nations, as well as to other bodies and institutions. It used every opportunity for organizing pressure campaigns and for evoking a permanent crisis both within the country as well as in relations to the allies. Its main effort was to constantly keep the situation at the boiling point and the whole public in systematic tension and nervousness.

In pushing through their aims, the rightist opportunists managed also now, just as before August 1968, to shamelessly gamble with everything that was beneficial for the Republic and her people and that was to be a firm stone in the stabilization of the socialist State. This applied also to the equitable adjustment of nationality relations within the framework of the federative set-up of the ČSSR, which created the basis for really equal co-existence of Czechs and Slovaks. Evidence of this is, inter alia, also the noisy campaign around the election of the chairman of the newly constituted Federal Assembly.

When the rightist gamblers failed to push through

J. Smrkovský to the function of Chairman of the Federal Assembly, they concentrated their attention on the trade unions in an effort to transform them into an anti-Party and opposition force. They completed the dismemberment of the trade union movement and pushed through various adventurers, who have nothing in common with the interests of the working class, to leading positions. At the turn of 1968 and 1969, the revisionist circles used the tribune of many trade union congresses and assemblies for evoking strong pressure by which they wanted to force the adoption of the Law on the Enterprise and Enterprise Councils of Working People. This law was intended to result in the liquidation of central economic management and, under the guise of "direct producers' democracy", in the establishment of enterprise particularism ignoring the interests of the entire society, and in squeezing the CPCz out of enterprises.

However, the disruptive activities of the rightist and anti-socialist forces continued after August 1968 on the entire economic front. They resulted in a constant intensification of earlier economic diffi-

culties. For example wholesale and retail prices were rising constantly and without control. The situation was moreover complicated by deliberately created shopping runs. The consequences of the continuing inflationary wave seriously affected especially those strata of the population whose incomes had not grown.

After the November 1968 plenum of the CC CPCz, the right wing recruited especially young people and students for a new round of pressure campaigns aimed against the process of normalization. It organized students' strikes, demonstrations, various memoranda and other actions in which expression was given to the ultimative demands of the rightist opportunist and anti-Soviet front. The psychosis whipped up among university students led also to the personal tragedy of the student Jan Palach, for whose death the representatives of the right wing bear full political and moral responsibility. This event became the impulse for the instigation of a new anti-Party and anti-Soviet convulsion which was intended to symbolize before the world resistance against the establishment of calm and order in our country. The

notorious events in connection with the Ice-Hockey Championship at the end of March 1969 proved that the counter-revolution was determined to go any length in order to prevent the consolidation of the situation in our country, and that it is necessary to finally put an end to a situation in which our society was in the throes of continuous crises developing into catastrophic situations.

If a basic turn was to be achieved in the whole development, it was first of all necessary to solve the situation in the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia where a start had to be made by a radical change and rectification. The departure of A. Dubček was an unconditional necessity if the Party and the entire society were not to continue to reel in a vicious circle of constant states of crisis.

The purposefully developed efforts of the Marxist-Leninist forces within the Party created prerequisites for fundamental changes to be made in the leadership and in the policy of the Party at the plenary session of the CC CPCz in April 1969, whose results were received with satisfaction and agreement by the majority of Czechoslovak communists. The recalling of

A. Dubček from the highest Party function and the election of G. Husák to the function of First Secretary of the CC CPCz opened a new stage in which the process of changes in the ratio of forces within the Party acquired a qualitatively new level. Although the right wing still maintained significant positions in the newly elected Presidium, in the persons of A. Dubček, O. Černík, it had already lost determining influence in the leadership of the Party. The decisive initiative and activity within the CPCz passed irreversibly into the hands of the Marxist-Leninist Left.

Alexander Dubček did not even in the further development help the Party in overcoming the difficult situation, nor did he self-critically re-assess his offences against the interests of the Party and its internationalist obligations. Because of his anti-Party attitude and factional activities, which were incompatible with the Party Rules, he was in June 1970 expelled from the ranks of the CPCz.

The cadre changes in the Presidium and in the Secretariat of the CC CPCz after the April 1969 plenum of the CC CPCz created decisive prerequi-

sites for overcoming the protracted crisis within the Party and society and for an offensive against the rightist opportunist and anti-socialist pressures. Appropriate interventions and measures strengthened the power organs of the socialist State which began to take resolute action against counter-revolutionary elements and violators of socialist legality. The mass media, from which the main exponents of the right wing were gradually removed, began to be controlled and influenced by Party and State bodies.

The May 1969 plenum of the CC CPCz discussed and approved the Implementation Directive which contained programme tasks for the immediate period. The aim was:

- to defeat the right wing ideologically and organizationally, to restore Party unity on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and to fully liquidate the positions of anti-socialist forces in society;
- to restore and strengthen internationalist ties with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries and to regain the authority of the CPCz in the international communist movement;

- to develop the role of the socialist State and to strengthen its bodies;
- to ensure the leading role of the Party in the political system of the National Front and to return to this system its socialist character;
- to halt the inflation and to achieve a gradual consolidation of the national economy.

In order to ensure these aims, it was inevitable to lay down correct tactics which would make it possible to avoid both overcautiousness as well as radicalist moods. This alone could create prerequisites for the Marxist-Leninist Left to strengthen, and for the growth of its influence. This at the same time created optimum conditions for the broadest masses to gradually find out for themselves about the double-dealing face of Dubček's policy and the sincere efforts of the new leadership to solve the vital interests of the people and to lead the Party and society out of shocks of crisis.

In fulfilling the tasks of the Implementation Directive, the Marxist-Leninist forces were gaining and extending their positions in the Party bodies, whereas many representatives of the right wing had to resign

their functions or were deprived of them as a result of their defeat. Thanks to comrades who took up leading positions in the mass media, their tone and orientation changed. Gradually, the public began to learn about the real background of the so-called process of revival and democratization and to find out about the perniciousness of the unclean policy of the rightist leaders.

On the occasion of the first anniversary of the events of August, rightist and counter-revolutionary elements in Prague and other places once again instigated street disturbances and hostile actions against the Party, its political course and our socialist allies. However, this measuring of strength had a catastrophic outcome for the reactionary forces and rightists, as they suffered a crushing defeat. They failed in their attempt to provoke open mass resistance because the majority of people whom they had earlier succeeded to deceive had already seen through their adventurous game so that the main force on which they could rely was the criminal underworld. The fact that the disturbances of August 1969 were frustrated by the resolute course of the

Party and Government bodies, and that they were liquidated by our own means of power, was not only the expression of the advancing consolidation of our social life but at the same time raised the feeling of certainty of communists and all honest followers of socialism. The resolute intervention of the People's Militia, the Security body and members of our Army proved that if the leadership of the Party is firm and resolute, it can rely on the strength of these armed components.

At its sessions of September 1969 and January and June 1970, the CC CPCz cleansed its ranks of rightist officials and adopted a number of measures which created the necessary basis for further development of the political and ideological struggle aimed at overcoming the revisionist and opportunist ballast and for ensuring the further sound development of our socialist society.

Within a relatively short period of time, planned management of the national economy was again strengthened, the market was stabilized, the prospects of economic bankruptcy were averted and essential conditions were created for an upward development

of the economy. In response to an appeal of the CC CPCz, broad active participation and initiative of working people developed with the aim of raising production and social productivity of labour. An important contribution to the stabilization of the Czechoslovak national economy was made by further assistance on the part of the Soviet Union.

Of far-reaching importance was the decision of the January 1970 plenary session of the CC CPCz on the exchange of Party cards. The great struggle for saving socialism in the ČSSR and against all attempts to liquidate the Party as a Marxist-Leninist and internationalist force subjected every Czechoslovak communist to a test. The result of this test became the main part of the individual assessment of the overall attitudes of every Party member at Party interviews. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia parted with more than one fifth of its former members who did not pass the test in the critical period, because their stands did not correspond to the demands placed upon communists. The check-up resulted in an organizational strengthening and ideological consolidation of the whole Party, and created

conditions for the fulfilment of its historical mission of the vanguard of socialist society.

Together with the advancing consolidation of the internal life of the Party and the State, the international political position of the ČSSR was also strengthened and the international authority of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in the communist movement was restored. The stand taken by the delegation of our Party at the Moscow International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties, in June 1969, left no doubt that the CPCz will, in harmony with its traditions, effectively contribute to the strengthening of Marxist-Leninist unity and the action capacity of world communism.

In the course of 1969 and 1970, comradely relations were fully restored and expanded between the ČSSR and the CPCz and the other socialist countries and their fraternal parties. Today, they are firmer and deeper than at any time in the past.

The basis of the internationalist ties of our Party and the Czechoslovak State is our fraternal solidarity with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the USSR. This Leninist unity of interests and aims

of our two parties and countries was also expressed by the new treaty of alliance with the Soviet Union, of May 6, 1970, which reaffirms the determination of our nations to always go along a common road with the Soviet comrades and never otherwise.

In the last period, thousands of members and functionaries of the Party waged a courageous and selfless fight in which they did not spare their forces in order to cleanse the shield of their Party and its Marxist-Leninist character. For this they quite rightly deserve appreciation. However, the danger on the part of rightist opportunism, which was actually organizationally crushed, has not yet by far passed and it will still require a lot of time and forces before its influence is fully overcome.

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The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is closing a period of the development of our Party and of the entire socialist society. It is a period filled with selfless efforts of the Party and all working people to build an all-round rich and happy life of the citizens of our homeland. It is at

the same time a period in which our Party and society, every communist, every citizen, old or young, has passed through a historical test of the firmness and strength of his socialist conviction. In the sharp political struggle with revisionist, opportunist and counter-revolutionary forces, we learned to discern friend from foe, in order that we may separate chaff from the grain and crush the attempt at a counter-revolutionary reversal, from the mortal embrace of which we escaped merely by a hair's breadth, thanks to the internationalist assistance of the fraternal socialist countries.

The lessons drawn from the great tests, struggles and hard fights commit our Party, every communist, every honest socialist-minded citizen of our country to protect and develop socialism and to permit never again and no one to threaten it, no matter how pleasing words and slogans he may use as a cover. This is our revolutionary, national, class and internationalist duty.

The guarantee of this can be only a communist party which stands firmly on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, a party steeled in class struggle

with the enemy, cleansed of all influences of opportunism and revisionism, a party which by its clear and realistic policy expresses the most noble aspirations and aims of the working man. We are deeply aware of the Leninist principle that the strength of our Party lies in its connection with the people. We joined the ranks of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia of our own free will and we assumed a responsibility before our own people as well as before all progressive forces throughout the world. We want to fulfil this demanding task of communists with honour. We regard this as our sacred duty – to fight and work with the people for the people, for its welfare and peaceful life. This is the bequest of the revolutionary and internationalist traditions of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the bequest of the best sons of the Party, of Kl. Gottwald, which represent the inviolable basis of the existence and strength of our Party in all its fifty-years long existence. These principles are followed by the course upon which the Central Committee of the CPCz embarked after April 1969 and which it is consistently implementing in its policy.

We are a firm component of the world socialist community. Our successes in the past and our road ahead are closely linked with the first country of the socialist revolution – with the Soviet Union. Without its assistance, we could not have solved and coped with so complicated and great tasks as were and are required by socialist development in our country. Drawing a lesson from the bitter past, we shall protect like the apple of our eye the sacred bequest of the progressive forces of our nations and the alliance with the Soviet Union, the guarantee of our national, social and State sovereignty.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is deeply convinced that all communists will also in future be unswerving fighters for the realization of the present policy of the Party, that they will win over for its implementation every honest citizen – worker, farmer and member of the intelligentsia.

Years will pass, time will heal many things and cover them with other events. However, what will remain are the results of the heroic and selfless efforts of the people, the great work of construction

of socialism created under the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, what will remain is the Party which will continue to lead the nations to an even better future. Every honest citizen of our Republic must strive for our children, grandchildren, the entire future generation, to be filled with pride in the work of their fathers and mothers, so that they may develop and enhance their bequest. This is not, and will not be an easy road. It is a pioneer road, a road calling for heroism, selflessness and self-denial. However, it is a road of honour, glory and the future which leads to the fulfilment of the aspirations of every citizen to live a contented and happy life.

Under the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, forward to further construction of socialism in our homeland!

RESOLUTION ON TOPICAL QUESTIONS OF PARTY UNITY

Communist movement and the Party as the force of the crisis development in the Party and society after the 13th congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia confirm, that the Party has fulfilled its historical role to lead the revolutionary proletarian to overthrow the exploiting classes with the support of the working people, to be the leading political force in the construction of socialism, to ensure the development of society, to elaborate a correct political line and to consistently implement it under the condition of Marxist-Leninist political, ideological and organisational unity. This unity is the source of its strength, the expression of its responsibility to the working class and other working people, as well as the prerequisite of the Party's firm ties with the people.

The difficult years we have gone through recently have again shown how deeply our socialist society had been shaken by the disruption of the Party's unity.

In the period of 1968-1969, the Marxist-Leninist forces waged a struggle against the disruption of

The fifty-year history of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the experience of the international communist movement and the lessons drawn from the crisis development in the Party and society after the 13th congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia confirm, that the Party can fulfil its historical role to lead the revolutionary proletariat, to overthrow the exploiting classes with the support of the working people, to be the leading political force in the construction of socialism, to foresee the development of society, to elaborate a correct political line and to consistently implement it only under the condition of Marxist-Leninist political, ideological and organizational unity. This unity is the source of its strength, the expression of its responsibility to the working class and other working people, as well as the prerequisite of the Party's firm ties with the people.

The difficult tests we have gone through recently have again shown how dearly our socialist society had to pay for the disruption of the Party's unity.

In the period of 1968-1969, the Marxist-Leninist forces waged a struggle against the disruptors of the

Party's unity and defended principled Marxist-Leninist unity. The right wing was politically defeated in this struggle. The Party parted ways with it organizationally during the exchange of Party cards. In the clash with the right wing, the Party unified its views, strengthened itself organizationally and improved its tactical course.

The Party must deepen and develop the unity which was being created in a difficult and complicated struggle, while fully and consistently implementing the statutes, guard like the apple of the eye the cohesion of Party ranks and not allow its revolutionary, Marxist-Leninist and internationalist character to be weakened.

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The right wing, which has not reconciled itself with its defeat, continues to represent the main political danger. Its aims have not changed. It is serving anti-communist strategic designs of imperialism striving for the disruption of the Party and socialism from within. However, it has changed its tactics:

- It conceals its guilt by insincerity, attempts to continue deceiving and strives to maintain its influence;
- After the loss of its positions of power, it speculates with the vestiges of its anti-socialist influence on the consciousness of people, orientates itself on taking advantage of our difficulties and magnifies them, creates an atmosphere of uncertainty and mutual suspicion, throws doubt upon the taken course and disparages the political and economic results;
- It relies on various international difficulties, from which it expects impulses for its new subversive activities. It therefore revives and spreads anti-Sovietism, which it continues to regard as its main weapon.

An effective struggle against rightist opportunism and revisionism presupposes a long-term conception of active political and ideological work of the Party, which must be purposefully concentrated on:

- Overcoming rightist opportunist attitudes, revisionist theories, petty-bourgeois ideology and consistent exposure of the roots of the rightist platform;
- Measures which will effectively frustrate the efforts

of the right wing to gain ideological and power positions, and to prevent it organizationally from influencing public opinion;

- Overcoming shortcomings in the construction of socialism and in the work of Party, State, economic and social bodies and organizations;
- Consistent care of the purity of Party ranks, blocking any penetration of alien elements into the Party, and definitively strengthening the working-class character of the Party. Care of Marxist-Leninist development is a binding norm for every Party body and organization.

The struggle with the right wing must be waged in such a manner that it strengthens Party unity and creates firm foundations for permanent development of the activity of the whole Party and, under its leadership, of all working people. This requires that every communist proceed consistently from the Leninist content of Party unity:

- As an ideological unity based on a class approach and on consistent and creative implementation of the principles of Marxism-Leninism;
- As an organizational unity expressed in an ap-

proach combining initiative and discipline to the fulfilment of Party tasks and Party statutes by Party members;

- As a political and action unity which binds all Party organizations and members to fulfil consistently the Party line contained in resolutions of the congress, the Central Committee and lower Party bodies;
- As part of the international unity, for the Party to be a firm link of the international communist movement and to be able to fulfil all its internationalist duties and make an active contribution to the implementation of the conclusions of the Moscow Meeting of 1969.

The Party creates its ideological, organizational and action unity in everyday purposeful and organized work, in constant struggle for the revolutionary activity of the Party and the masses.

The struggle for the ideological unity of the Party, for overcoming rightist opportunism, requires all bodies and organizations and all members of the Party to carry out actively mass-political work, to acquire Marxism-Leninism, to overcome a libera-

listic approach to the penetration of alien views, not to permit ideological compromises, to act resolutely against all expressions of bourgeois ideology, and to act always in the spirit of communist adherence to principles. In this due attention must be given to the unity of ideological and organizational work.

The deepening of organizational unity requires:

- To consistently apply the principles of democratic centralism, i. e. to respect unconditionally resolutions of higher Party bodies by lower Party bodies and organizations and all members of the Party. Not to permit arbitrary interpretation of Party resolutions. To prevent the necessary and desirable exchange of views in the creation and realization of Party resolutions from being transferred outside the Party. To overcome the practice of “unrestricted” freedom of criticism and association outside the framework of the organizational structure of the Party. Not to permit the placing of individual interest above the interests of the Party, and the separation of rights and duties of Party members;
- To see to the development of intra-Party democracy within the terms of Party Statutes. To establish

conditions for the development of the creative activity and initiative of every communist. To observe the principles of collective leadership, equality of the rights and duties of all members regardless of functions, the right of every communist to freely voice his views on problems discussed and to submit observations to higher Party bodies up to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. To see to it that criticism has a matter-of-fact content, that it is based on the Party's adherence to principles and that it leads to the strengthening of the Party and that it is not suppressed. Each Party organ must be accountable for its work;

- To draw the necessary conclusions from passivity of Party members, which weakens the Party's ability to act, demoralizes the Party collective, and throws bad light on the name of Party members in the eyes of the public. Proclaiming and spreading of rightist opportunist views, revisionist conceptions and anti-Soviet manifestations is incompatible with membership in the Party.

For the strengthening of Party unity, it is equally binding, together with ideological and organizational

principles, to observe the procedure laid down by Party bodies:

- Failure to observe the approved procedure, whether this may be caused by impatience, petty-bourgeois radicalism, overlooking of the experience of masses, skipping of the necessary stages, or opportunist temporizing, disrupts the action unity of the Party and is harmful;
- Failure to observe the procedure prepares the ground for the forming of groups and factional activity.

It is necessary to avoid everything that, in contradiction with the best traditions of the Party and the present policy, would play into the hands of sectarian isolation. The strength of the Party lies in its ties with the masses, in the consistent implementation of the time-proved Gottwald slogan 'With face toward the masses'.

Proceeding from the 'Lessons drawn from the crisis development in the Party and society after the 13th congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia', approved by the December session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cze-

choslovakia, the Party must do everything for the full implementation of democratic centralism and intra-Party democracy in its work. Only thus will it be possible to fully restore the active life of Party bodies and organizations.

*Approved by the plenary session of the Central Committee
of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on December 11,
1970*